

AN
IMPARTIAL REPORT
OF THE
DEBATES

THAT OCCUR IN THE
TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

In the Course of the First Session of the Eighteenth Parliament
of Great Britain, called to meet at Westminster, on
Tuesday the 27th of September, 1796.

WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RESPECTIVE SPEAKERS,
AND
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

INCLUDING COPIES OF ALL
STATE PAPERS, TREATIES, CONVENTIONS, &c.

By WILLIAM WOODFALL,
AND ASSISTANTS.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED by T. CHAPMAN, No. 151, FLEET-STREET.

1797.



CONTENTS

OF
THE SECOND VOLUME
OF
THE FIFTH SESSION OF
Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.		Page
<i>Tuesday, February 14, 1797.</i>		
S HERIFFS of London present petition praying the extension of Courts of Conscience	1	11
<i>Wednesday, Feb. 22.</i>		
CORN.		16
Speech of Alderman Lushington	ib.	ib.
<i>Friday, Feb. 24.</i>		
MERCANTILE INDEMNITY.		
Speech of Alderman Lushington	18	18
—Mr. Sheridan	19	19
QUAKERS BILL.		
Speech of Sir Wm. Scott	20	20
—Mr. Serjeant Adair	28	28
—Solicitor General	34	34
—Mr. Wigley	36	36
—Mr. Richards	ib.	ib.
—Mr. Wilberforce	ib.	ib.
—Mr. Frazer	37	37
—Mr. F. Burton	ib.	ib.
<i>Monday, Feb. 27.</i>		
LANDING OF THE FRENCH IN WALES.		46
Conversation	ib.	ib.
CANTERBURY ELECTION.		47
STATE OF THE COUNTRY.		48
Speech of Col. Wood	ib.	ib.
MESSAGE		
HOUSE OF COMMONS.		
<i>Tuesday, February 14, 1797.</i>		
S HERIFFS of London present petition praying the extension of Courts of Conscience	1	11
<i>Wednesday, Feb. 15.</i>		
Sir Wm. Pulteney presents petition from Shrewsbury	3	3
Conversation upon it	4	4
POOR BILL.		
Speech of Mr. Rose	ib.	ib.
—Mr. Whitbread	ib.	ib.
—Mr. Mainwaring	ib.	ib.
QUAKERS BILL.		
Speech of Serjeant Adair	ib.	ib.
<i>Monday, Feb. 20.</i>		
On contested Elections		
Mr. Fox	8	8
SOUTHWARK ELECTION.		
Speech of Mr. Thornton	9	9
—Mr. Tierney	11	11

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
MESSAGE FROM THE KING		Speech of Mr. Sheridan	131
RELATIVE TO THE BANK.	49	—Mr. Wilberforce	132
Speech of the Chancellor of the		—Solicitor General	ib.
Exchequer	ib.	—the Chancellor of the	
—Mr. Fox	50	Exchequer	133
—Alderman Combe	52	—Mr. Fox	ib.
REMITTANCE TO THE EMPE-		—Mr. Coke	134
ROR.		BANK NOTES FOR SMALL SUMS.	
Speech of Mr. Sheridan	53	Speech of Mr. Grey	135
—Mr. Nichol	ib.	—the Chancellor of the	
—the Chancellor of the		Exchequer	136
Exchequer	56	—Mr. Fox	ib.
—Mr. Fox	58	—Mr. Bragge	ib.
—Secretary Dundas	60	—Mr. Sheridan	ib.
—Sir Wm. Milner	61	—Solicitor General	137
POOR BILL.		—Mr. Tierney	ib.
—Mr. Whitbread	62	ORDER OF COUNCIL.	138
—the Chancellor of the		Speech of Mr. Fox	ib.
Exchequer	ib.	—General Walpole	142
—Mr. Sheridan	ib.	—the Chancellor of the	
—Mr. Vanittart	63	Exchequer	ib.
CONDUCT OF ADMINISTRATION	ib.	—Mr. Sheridan	143
Speech of Mr. Whitbread	ib.	—Secretary at War	148
Minority (List of)	64	—Mr. Grey	149
<i>Tuesday, Feb. 28.</i>		—Mr. Wilberforce	152
HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE.		—Mr. Curwen	153
Speech of the Chancellor of the		—Master of the Rolls	ib.
Exchequer	89, 115, 126	—Mr. Powell	154
—Mr. Fox	92, 126, 127	—Mr. Pollen	ib.
—Mr. Hobhouse	106	—Mr. Nicholls	ib.
—Mr. Martin	ib.	—Dr. Laurence	155
—Sir John Sinclair	ib.	—Mr. Courtenay	158
—Mr. W. Smith	108	—Attorney General	160
—Lord Wycombe	109	—Mr. Banks	ib.
—Mr. Pollen	111	—Mr. Fox	162
—Mr. C. Yorke	ib.	List of Minority	172
—Mr. W. Bird	ib.	<i>Thursday, March 2.</i>	
—Sir Wm. Pulteney	112	Conversation on Finance and Paper	
—Mr. Hufley	114	Credit	174
—Mr. Curwen	118	<i>Friday, March 3.</i>	
—Mr. Baftard	119	BILL RESPECTING THE ISSUE OF	
—Mr. Dent	ib.	SMALL NOTES.	
—Mr. Sheridan	120	Speech of Mr. W. Bird	178
—Mr. S. Thornton	124	—Mr. Hawkins Browne	ib.
—Secretary Dundas	ib.	—Mr. Sheridan	179
—Mr. Grey	125	—Master of the Rolls	180
—Attorney General	ib.	—the Chancellor of the	
List of Minority	128	Exchequer	ib.
NOTES FOR SMALL SUMS.	130	ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JERVIS.	
<i>Wednesday, March 1.</i>		Speech of Secretary Dundas	181,
Speech of Mr. W. Bird	ib.		187, 188
			Speech

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Speech of Mr. Fox	182, 187	<i>Friday, March 10.</i>	
—Mr. Keene	<i>ib.</i>	PROMULGATION OF THE	
—Mr. Martin	183	STATUTES.	
—Sir Charles Banbury	<i>ib.</i>	Speech of Mr. Abbot	291
—the Chancellor of the		COMMITTEE ON STATE OF	
Exchequer	184	NATION.	
—Mr. Sheridan	186	Speech of the Chancellor of	
—Mr. Courtenay	188	the Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Grey	189	—Mr. Sheridan	292
—Mr. Harrison	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Grey	294
BANK OF ENGLAND.		—Mr. Pollen	<i>ib.</i>
Speech of Mr. Brampton	<i>ib.</i>	—Colonel Porter	<i>ib.</i>
—Attorney-General	190	—Secretary Dundas	295
—Mr. Grey	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Courtenay	296
ATTEMPT TO INVADE IRELAND.		—Mr. J. H. Addington	<i>ib.</i>
Speech of Mr. Whitbread	191	—Mr. Fox	297
—Secretary Dundas	196	—Mr. Curwen	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Grey	208	—Mr. Braham	<i>ib.</i>
—Secretary at War	212	—Mr. W. Smith	298
—Mr. Fox	213	—Mr. Yorke	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Sturt	217	BANK OF ENGLAND.	
—the Chancellor of the		Speech of Mr. Sheridan	300, 134
Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	—the Chancellor of the	
<i>Monday, March 6.</i>		Exchequer	306
HIGH PRICE OF BUTCHERS MEAT.		—Mr. Fox	310
Speech of Mr. Mainwaring	240	<i>Monday, March 10.</i>	
QUAKERS BILL.		BANK OF ENGLAND.	315
Speech of Mr. Pierrepont	244	Speech of the Chancellor of	
—Serjeant Adair	<i>ib.</i>	the Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>
—Solicitor-General	245	Ballot for Secret Committee on	
<i>Tuesday, March 7.</i>		Finance	<i>ib.</i>
TWO REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE		PUBLIC RETRENCHMENT.	316
ON STATE OF THE BANK.	247	Speech of Mr. Harrison	<i>ib.</i>
Speech of the Chancellor of		—Lord Wm. Russell	320
the Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	—the Chancellor of the	
—Mr. W. Smith	248	Exchequer	322
<i>Thursday, March 9.</i>		—Mr. Sheridan	330
COLCHESTER ELECTION.		—Mr. Rose	336
Petition presented by Mr. Tier-		—Secretary at War	339
ney	250	—Mr. Pollen	343
BANK.		—Mr. Balford	<i>ib.</i>
Speech of Mr. Tierney	251	—Serjeant Adair	344
—the Chancellor of the		—Mr. Fox	345
Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	—the Speaker	350
—Mr. Fox	264	—Mr. Canning	<i>ib.</i>
—Lord Hawkesbury	273	—Dr. Laurence	351
—Solicitor-General	275	—Mr. Tierney	352
—Mr. Sheridan	251, 279	<i>Friday, March 17.</i>	
—Mr. W. Smith	288	STOPPAGE OF THE BANK.	
List of Minority on Mr. Whitbread's		Speech of the Chancellor of	
motion respecting Ireland	289	the Exchequer	398
		Speech	

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Speech of Mr. Fox	398	STATE OF IRELAND.	
—Sir John Sinclair	399	Speech of Mr. Fox	483
—Mr. Hobhouse	400	—Sir Robert Burdett	503, 519
—Mr. Bryan Edwards	ib.	—the Chancellor of the	
—Lord Hawkesbury	ib.	Exchequer	504
—Mr. Grey	401	—Col. Fullarton	512
—Mr. Tierney	402	—Lord Wycombe	514
SLAVE TRADE.		—Mr. Curwen	516
Speech of Mr. Wilberforce	404	—Mr. Courtenay	517
—Sir Wm. Young	ib.	—Lord Frederick Campbell	518
—the Chancellor of the			
Exchequer	405	Friday, March 24.	
Monday, March 20.		Mr. Rider (on Corn)	522
MINUTE OF COUNCIL RESPECTING		MILLER'S PETITION.	
THE BANK.		Speech of Mr. Fox	ib.
Speech of the Chancellor of		BANK INDEMNITY BILL.	
the Exchequer	408	Speech of Mr. Fox	523, 524
—Mr. Dent	409	—Mr. Whitbread	ib. 526
BILL FOR BETTER PROMUL-		—the Chancellor of the	
GATION OF THE STATUTES.		Exchequer	524, 527
Speech of Mr. Abbot	410	—Mr. Sheridan	524, 526, 527,
Wednesday, March 22.			529
WASTE LANDS.		—Sir Wm. Pulteney	ib. 528
Speech of Sir John Sinclair	432	—Mr. Ellison	528
—Sir Wm. Pulteney	433	—Mr. Lubbock	530
FOREIGNERS IN GREAT BRITAIN.		Monday, March 27.	
Speech of Mr. Keene	434	BREAD.	
—Secretary Dundas	435	Speech of Mr. Alderman Ander-	
STOPPAGE OF THE BANK.		fon	554
Speech of Mr. Nicholls	436	—Mr. Rider	ib.
—Mr. Dent	438	BANK BILL.	
—Mr. Fox	ib. 443, 458, 463	Speech of the Chancellor of	
—the Chancellor of the		the Exchequer	ib. 558, 559
Exchequer	439, 460	—Mr. Fox	556, 558, 559, 562
—Sir Francis Baring	444	—Mr. Hufsey	557
—Mr. W. Smith	ib.	—Sir Francis Baring	557
—Mr. Manning	445	—Mr. Hobhouse	564
—Mr. Pollen	446	—Mr. Sheridan	ib.
—Solicitor-General	ib.	—Mr. Nicholls	562
—Mr. Baftard	ib.	—Mr. Manning	565
—Mr. Whitbread	447	Tuesday, March 28.	
—Mr. Sheridan	ib.	BANK INDEMNITY BILL.	
—Alderman Lushington	451	Speech of the Chancellor of	
—Attorney-General	452, 455	the Exchequer	566
—Sir Wm. Pulteney	454	CORN BILL.	
—Sir John Sinclair	464	Speech of Mr. Ryder	ib.
—Mr. Wilberforce	465	—Mr. Whitbread	567
Thursday, March 23.		—Mr. Yorke	ib.
RELIEF OF DEBTORS.		DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.	
Speech of Col. Stanley	483	Speech of Col. Wood	568, 578
		Speech	

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Speech of Secretary Dundas	570	Speech of Sir Wm. Pulteney	635
—Mr. Fox	572	—Lord G. Cavendish	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Courtenay	573		
—Col. Fullarton	574	<i>Wednesday, April 5.</i>	
—Mr. Sheridan	576	ARMY EXTRAORDINARIES.	
—General Tarleton	577	Speech of Secretary at War	656
		—General Tarleton	<i>ib.</i>
<i>Friday, March 31.</i>		—General Walpole	657
ON GRAIN.		—Secretary Dundas	<i>ib.</i>
Speech of Alderman Curtis	585	BANK INDEMNITY BILL.	
—Mr. Coke	<i>ib.</i>	Speech of Mr. Balford	637
—Mr. Whitbread	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. W. Bird	<i>ib.</i>
ADVANCES TO THE EMPEROR.		—Solicitor-General	638
Speech of Mr. Sheridan	586	—Mr. Manning	<i>ib.</i>
—the Chancellor of the		—Sir Wm. Pulteney	639
Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	—the Chancellor of the	
—Mr. Fox	587	Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Grey	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Bryan Edwards	641
POOR BILL.		SLAVE TRADE.	
Speech of Mr. Grey	588	Speech of Mr. Charles Ellis	<i>ib.</i>
—the Chancellor of the		—Mr. Barham	645
Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Wilberforce	<i>ib.</i>
ORDER OF COUNCIL.		—Mr. Bryan Edwards	649
Speech of the Chancellor of		—the Chancellor of the	
the Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	Exchequer	651
—Mr. Fox	595	—Lord Hawkesbury	653
—Mr. Tierney	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. W. Smith	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Dent	591	—Secretary Dundas	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. H. Thornton	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Dudley Ryder	654
—Mr. Sheridan	594	—Mr. Fox	<i>ib.</i>
—Alderman Combe	595		
—Sir Wm. Pulteney	596	<i>Friday, April 7.</i>	
<i>Monday, April 3.</i>		CORN EXPORTATION.	
IMPERIAL LOAN.		Speech of Mr. Ryder	656
Speech of Mr. Sheridan	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Whitbread	<i>ib.</i>
BANK INDEMNITY BILL.		—Mr. Hufsey	657
Speech of Mr. Tierney	597	—Mr. Fox	<i>ib.</i>
—the Chancellor of the		—the Chancellor of the	
Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>
—Sir Wm. Pulteney	<i>ib.</i>	BANK INDEMNITY BILL.	
BANK CORRESPONDENCE.		Speech of Mr. Fox	658
Speech of Mr. Sheridan	598	—the Chancellor of the	
—Mr. D. Ryder	<i>ib.</i>	Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>
—the Speaker	<i>ib.</i>	—Mr. Hobhouse	<i>ib.</i>
<i>Tuesday, April 4.</i>		—Sir Wm. Pulteney	659
ADVANCES TO THE EMPEROR.		—Mr. S. Thornton	662
Speech of Mr. Sheridan	599, 632	<i>Monday, April 10.</i>	
—the Chancellor of the		Speech of Mr. Pollen	663
Exchequer	612	—the Chancellor of the	
—Mr. Fox	623	Exchequer	669, 688
		—Col. Porter	674
		—Mr. Addington	<i>ib.</i>
		Speech	

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Speech of Mr. Fox	678	HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE.	
—Sir Wm. Pulteney	695	<i>Tuesday, Feb. 28.</i>	
—Col. Fullarton	696	Speech of Lord Grenville	64, 74,
—Sir John Macpherson	699		76, 87
—Mr. Johns	700	—Duke of Grafton	67, 77
—Mr. Weston	701	—Earl of Guildford	68
<i>Monday, April 24.</i>		—Liverpool	69
MUTINY AT PORTSMOUTH.	705	—Duke of Bedford	71, 75
Speech of Mr. Fox	<i>ib.</i>	—Lord Auckland	73
—the Chancellor of the		—Earl Fauconberg	<i>ib.</i>
Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	—Duke of Norfolk	76
REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF SUP-		—Marquis of Lansdown	77, 87
PLY.	708	—Lord Chancellor	86
BILL FOR EQUAL RATE IN MID-		<i>Thursday, March 2.</i>	
DLESEX	708	Secret Committee on affairs of	
Speech of Mr. Mainwaring	<i>ib.</i>	the Bank of England—ap-	
—Marquis of Titchfield	<i>ib.</i>	pointed	174
BUDGET.		<i>Friday, March 3.</i>	
Speech of the Chancellor of		Notices	176
the Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	Speech of Earl Spencer	<i>ib.</i>
—Mr. Fox	728	—Duke of Bedford	176
—Mr. Grey	736	—Lord Chancellor	177
—Mr. Steele	737	THE MARQUIS OF LANDSDOWN.	
—Mr. Sheridan	738	Speech of the Lord Chancellor	<i>ib.</i>
REPORT OF BUDGET.	741	<i>Monday, March 6.</i>	
Speech of the Chancellor of		Earl of Chatham presents report	
the Exchequer	<i>ib.</i>	on the State of the Bank	219
—Mr. Fox	<i>ib.</i>	THANKS TO SIR JOHN JERVIS.	
—Mr. Wm. Smith	<i>ib.</i>	Speech of Earl Spencer	220
HOUSE OF LORDS.		—Duke of Bedford	221
<i>Tuesday, Feb. 1.</i>		—Duke of Clarence	<i>ib.</i>
COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES.		—Lord Hood	224
Lord Lauderdale's petitions } 12		—Earl of Guildford	<i>ib.</i>
Heard Council on } 13		—Lord Chancellor	225
Speech of Mr. Adam		—Earl of Carlisle	226
<i>Monday, Feb. 27.</i>		—Lord Grenville	<i>ib.</i>
MESSAGE FROM HIS MAJESTY.		—Lord Sydney	227
RESPECTING THE BANK OF		—Lord Boringdon	<i>ib.</i>
ENGLAND.	39	COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY INTO	
Speech of Lord Grenville	<i>ib.</i>	CAUSES OF THE ORDER OF	
—Duke of Norfolk	40	COUNCIL, OF FEB. 26.	
—Earl of Guildford	41	Speech of Duke of Bedford	229,
—Lord Romney	42		234, 238
—Duke of Grafton	43	—Lord Grenville	232, 237
—Earl of Moira	45	—Duke of Norfolk	233
LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.		—Earl of Guildford	<i>ib.</i> , 236
Speech of Earl Moira	46	—Earl of Fauconberg	235
		—Duke of Montrose	239
		Speech	

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Speech of the Lord Chancellor	239	Speech of Earl Fitzwilliam	418
<i>Tuesday, March 7.</i>		Earl of Liverpool	416
COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES.		Lord Grenville	421, 425
Ballot of Peers as Committee to en-		Earl of Guildford	422
quire into the causes of issuing		Earl of Spencer	ib.
Order of Feb. 20.	246	Marquis of Lansdown	423
<i>Thursday, March 9.</i>		Townshend	424
TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL.	249	Lord Darnley	426
Speech of Earl of Moira	ib.	Duke of Bedford	ib.
—Duke of Bridgewater	ib.	Lift of Minority	431
—Lord Chancellor	ib.	<i>Thursday, March 23.</i>	
<i>Tuesday, March 14.</i>		LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.	
Speech of Earl of Moira on the		Speech of Earl of Moira	466
Trent and Marley Canal bill	354	Speech of Marquis of Lansdown	ib.
LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.		on Economy	ib.
Speech of the Earl of Moira	ib.	MOTION FOR PEACE.	
STATE OF IRELAND.		Speech of the Earl of Oxford	467,
Speech of the Earl of Moira	ib.		476
—Lord Grenville	355	Lord Grenville	470, 480
<i>Thursday, March 16.</i>		Duke of Norfolk	ib.
PROTECTION OF IRELAND.		Lord Douglas (Earl of	
Speech of Earl of Albemarle	358	Moreton)	472
Earl of Spencer	364, 377	Marquis of Lansdown	ib. 460
Earl of Carlisle	369	Lord Boringdon	474
Marquis of Abercorn	374	Earl of Guildford	475
Earl of Moira	379	Spencer	ib.
Earl of Liverpool	381	Duke of Bedford	477, 479,
Duke of Bedford	382		481
Lord Hood	384	Earl of Carlisle	479
Lord Auckland	386	Coventry	480
Earl of Guildford	388	Warwick	482
Earl of Scarborough	390	Lift of Minority	483
Lord Grenville	ib.	<i>Monday, March 27.</i>	
Marquis of Lansdown	393	DEBTORS AND CREDITORS.	
Lift of Minority	387	Speech of Earl of Moira	532
<i>Monday, March 20.</i>		—Lord Kenyon	534
LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.		DISMISSION OF FIRST LORD OF	
Speech of Earl of Moira	405	THE TREASURY.	
—Lord Kenyon	406	Speech of the Earl of Suffolk	537
TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL.		Lord Grenville	539
Speech of Earl Moira	408	Lord Hay (Earl of Kin-	
<i>Tuesday, March 21.</i>		noul)	542
STATE OF IRELAND.	414	Duke of Norfolk	543
Speech of Earl of Moira	ib. 420, 429	Marquis Townsend	ib.
Lord Grenville	416	Earl of Warwick	ib.
		Derby	544
		Lord Romney	545, 547, 548
		Rawdon	547
		Earl Spencer	549
		Carlisle	ib.
		Speech	

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Speech of Marquis of Lansdown	<i>ib.</i> 552	APPENDIX.	
Lord Grenville	551	Treaty with Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt	1
Duke of Bedford	553	Account of money advanced by Bank for public service	8
<i>Wednesday, March 29.</i>		Account of Bounties paid Seamen to 10th of October	9
BREACH OF PRIVILEGE.		First report from Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons	10
Speech of the Earl of Oxford	579	Second ditto	11
Bishop of Rochester	580	First report ditto House of Lords	<i>ib.</i>
<i>Friday, April 7.</i>		Resolutions of Committee of Supply on Budget	12
STANDING ORDERS.		Account of produce of Customs	23
Speech of Lord Auckland	655	Account of Bills of Exchange paid by Bank	24
Lord Chancellor	<i>ib.</i>	Resolutions of Bank Directors	25
<i>Monday, April 24.</i>		Answers of the Chancellor of the Exchequer	26
INTERESTING PUBLIC EVENTS.			
Speech of the Duke of Grafton	703		
Lord Chancellor	704		

WOODFALL'S

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, *February 14, 1797.*

THE House met agreeably to their last adjournment. The Earl of *Coventry*, and several other Peers, took the oaths and their seats, and there being no public business before them, the House adjourned till the next day.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *February 14.*

New writs were ordered for the borough of Windsor, in the room of H. Isherwood, Esq. deceased; for the borough of Aldborough, in the room of R. Muilman Chiswell, Esq. deceased; and for the borough of Boffiny, in the room of John Stewart Wortley, Esq. deceased.

The Sheriffs of London presented a petition at the bar from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Council of the city of London, in Common Council assembled, praying for the extension of the jurisdiction of Courts of Conscience, and that leave be given to bring in a Bill for that purpose. The petition was brought up, read, and ordered to lie upon the table.

Mr. Alderman Anderson moved for leave to bring in the Bill. Leave given.

WET DOCKS.

A Petition was presented from the West India Planters and Merchants, praying that the Bill now pending in Parliament for the Construction of Wet Docks may pass into a law. The Petition was ordered to lie upon the table.

A Petition to the same effect was presented from the East India Company by Mr. Thornton, which was also ordered to lie upon the table.

The Sheriffs of London presented another petition from the Common Council of London in favour of the construction of Wet Docks, but praying that the House would allow them to

bring in a Bill for that purpose, as they were the chartered guardians of the trade of the river Thames. The Petition being read,

Mr Alderman *Anderson* moved, that it be referred to a Committee of the whole House.

Mr. *Manning* expressed his satisfaction that the Corporation of the city of London had at last come the length of acknowledging the necessity of making Wet Docks for the accommodation of the trade upon the river Thames, and that they were going to pursue a different line of conduct from that which they adopted last year, when they opposed the second reading of the Bill. The Bill which the merchants had brought in he expected to pass through that stage the next day, and he hoped that this Petition was not meant to obstruct its progress.

The *Speaker* informed the Honourable Member, that this petition did not at all interfere with the second reading of the Bill; that some petitions had already been presented for the hearing of Counsel against it in that stage, which would be a question for the House to decide upon the next day.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* said, he did not mean to oppose the second reading of the Bill the next day, nor had the city of London given any such instruction to its representatives; all he wished was, that they might be allowed to bring in another Bill, and that the House would decide upon their respective interests.

Mr. Alderman *Anderson* hoped that the second reading of the Bill would be put off to some distant day, that the House might be enabled to judge whether the plan of the merchants, or that which the city of London would propose, was preferable.

Mr. *Manning* opposed the suggestion of Alderman Anderson for postponing the second reading of the Bill.

The Petition was referred to a select Committee, who are ordered to report thereupon to the House.

Mr. *Newland*, from the Bank of England, presented at the bar an account of the Bills of Exchange accepted by the Treasury, and paid by the Bank from the 1st of January, 1795, to the 31st of December, 1796; and also an account of the sums issued by the Bank by order of the Commissioners appointed for the liquidation of the national debt during the same period, which were brought up, and ordered to lie upon the table.

The

The Bill for regulating the trial of causes and indictments in certain corporate towns and their districts was read a second time.

The Mutiny and Desertion Bill was read a second time.

The *Secretary at War* brought up some military returns, which were ordered to lie upon the table. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *February 15.*

Heard Counsel on the Scotch Appeal.—Ferguson, of Raith, against Gillespie, minister of Arrochay.

Adjourned to Friday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *February 15.*

An account of the amount of Exchequer Bills subscribed into Stock was laid upon the table.

Sir *William Pulteney* presented a Petition from the Mayor, Aldermen, &c. of the town of Shrewsbury, stating, that in the year 1784 a House of Industry had been there instituted at a considerable expence, and which had been attended with very beneficial consequences, having been the means of saving 19,300*l.* to the inhabitants; that, in its present shape, the Poor Bill which had been brought into Parliament would destroy the effects of the institution; they therefore prayed, that a clause might be inserted in the Bill, to exempt their institution from its operation. Referred to the Committee on the Poor Bill.

Petitions from a number of ship-owners in the city of London, from the traders of Hull to the port of London, from Scarborough, from the West India Colonies, &c. were presented in favour of the Wet Dock Bill.

Mr. *Wigley* presented a Petition from the prisoners for debt in Worcester gaol, many of whom had been confined upwards of two years, praying for relief.

The order of the day for the second reading of the Wet Dock Bill being read,

Mr. *Manning* stated, that a considerable difference existed between this Bill and that introduced last year, which he conceived would remove, in a good measure, the objections which had been urged against it. As the subject had already undergone so much discussion, he would not enter into any details concerning the Bill, but should content himself with moving, that it be then read a second time.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* said, that he approved the object of the present Bill, but there were many parts of it which he considered exceptionable, and should oppose.

Mr. Alderman *Anderson*, said that he had hoped that the House would, upon a full consideration, have made choice either of the plan produced by the merchants, or that offered by the city of London, and in their judgment he should have acquiesced. He did not mean to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but he would insist that counsel should be heard against those parts which were considered as exceptionable by the city of London.

Sir *William Young* said he was perfectly convinced of the necessity that something should be done to improve the navigation of the port of London, and was glad to find it was admitted by all parties; he sincerely hoped that the same temper would continue through the different stages of the Bill.

Sir *Francis Baring* said a few words in favour of the Bill.

The Bill was then read a second time, and committed to a Committee, consisting of Mr. Manning, the Members of the City of London, the maritime counties, &c.

The Committee on the Inland Navigation Duty Bill was postponed till this day se'nnight.

The Committees of Supply and Ways and Means were put off till Friday. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *February 16.*

This being the day appointed to ballot for a Committee to try the merits of a Petition complaining of an undue return for the borough of Downton, and there being only 90 members present, the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, *February 17.*

Heard counsel on the Scotch Appeal, Ferguson, of Raith, against Gillespie, minister of Arrochay, after which their Lordships affirmed the decree of the Court of Session. Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *February 17.*

A new writ was ordered to be made out by the Clerk of the Crown for the borough of Midhurst, in the county of Essex,
for

for the election of a burghers to serve in Parliament, in the room of the Right Honourable Sylvester Douglas, who has vacated his seat by accepting the office of one of the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's treasury.

POOR BILL.

A Petition was presented from the parish of Montgomery, stating that it would sustain considerable injury from the Poor Bill now pending in Parliament, and praying that it may not pass into law.

Mr. *Mainwaring* presented a Petition from the parishes of St. Martins in the Field, St. George, Hanover-square, St. Paul, Covent Garden, and St. Clement Danes, praying that the Bill now pending in Parliament for the Relief of the Poor may not pass into law.

The Order of the Day for taking into farther consideration the report of the Committee on the Poor Bill being read,

Mr. *Rose* moved that the farther consideration of the report be deferred till Monday se'nnight.

Mr. *Whitbread* asked if it was intended that the debate should take place on that day; and if this was the intention of the Honourable Gentleman, whether the schedules for the Bill would be prepared against that time, for without them the Bill would be quite unintelligible?

Mr. *Rose* said, that it was not the intention of his Right Honourable friend that the debate should take place upon the Bill until the schedules were prepared. He did not know in what progress these schedules were, but he knew they were in a state of preparation, and if they were not ready against Monday se'nnight, he assured the House it was not for want of attention on the part of those who had been appointed to draw up the Bill, for a great deal of pains had been bestowed upon it, but the subject was so complicated, that all the different branches of it could not be easily arranged in a short time. If the schedules, contrary to his expectation, could not be got ready against Monday se'nnight, he should then move that the consideration of the report be further postponed.

Mr. *Whitbread* stated, that it would be of as great consequence to obtain the sense of the country upon the schedules, as upon the other parts of the Bill; and that after they were prepared they ought to be circulated through the kingdom.

Mr. *Mainwaring* said, as he had that day presented a Petition against the Bill from a great majority of the parishes in Westminster, he hoped that notice would be given a considerable time before the discussion took place.

Mr.

Mr. *Rose* assured the Honourable Gentleman that previous notice should be given, and again repeated, that the delay which had taken place was not occasioned by inattention, but by the complicated nature of the subject to which the Bill related. The further consideration of the report was in the mean time fixed for Monday se'nnight.

EXPEDITION AGAINST IRELAND.

Mr. *Whitbread* gave notice, that on Friday next he would move for an enquiry into the conduct of Government on the occasion of the late threatened invasion of Ireland by the French.

Mr. *Fox's* motion for the repeal of the Treason and Sedition bills, which stood for that day, was postponed till Friday se'nnight.

The Members of the Committee to enquire into the merits of the Petition, complaining of an undue return for the borough of Downton, were chosen by ballot.

Mr. *Anstruther* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to enable the East India Company to raise money by encreasing their capital. Leave was given, and the Bill was brought in and read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Wednesday next.

QUAKERS' BILL.

The Order of the Day for the House resolving itself into a Committee of the whole House on the Bill for granting relief to Quakers being read,

Sir *W. Scott* moved, that on account of the importance of the Bill, and the thinness of the House, the Committee be put off till Tuesday next.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* was extremely sorry to observe in the state of the House such a good reason for deferring the Committee on the Bill. He was very much mortified to find that the acknowledged importance of the Bill had not been sufficient to secure a fuller attendance that day; and confident as he was that his Honourable Friend had made the present motion from no intention of defeating the Bill (as he was sure that if he had any objections to it, he would oppose it in a generous and manly way), he could not object to the proposed delay. He hoped, however, that the importance of the subject would secure a full attendance on Tuesday, as he was determined not to consent to its being longer delayed without taking the sense of the House.

Mr. *Wigley* expressed a desire that the House, at all events, should go into the Committee on Tuesday, as many individuals were suffering from the delay.

The

The *Master of the Rolls* suggested, that Wednesday would be a better day, as there were two Election ballots standing for Tuesday.

The Bill was ordered to be committed on Wednesday.

Mr. *Hawkins Browne* could not let the subject drop without contradicting the assertion of Mr. Wigley, that some individuals were suffering from the delay in passing the Bill.

Mr. *Wigley* appealed in confirmation of what he had said to the situation of the individual Quakers now confined in the York gaol; and added, that the hardships which they sustained had induced several Gentlemen last session to allow the Bill to pass, even with some inaccuracies.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* professed that he would much rather have the Bill passed in an inaccurate form than that these individuals should be subject to one day's unjust imprisonment.

The second reading of the Bill for regulating the trials of causes and indictments in certain towns corporate and their districts was deferred till Monday.

The Bill for preventing Mutiny and Desertion passed through a Committee of the whole House.

The *Secretary at War* stated, that the Bill was the same in substance with that passed last session, and differed only in the transpositions.

The report was ordered to be received on Monday.

Mr. *Wigley* gave notice, that on Monday he would move for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Bill imposing a tax upon Clerks articulated to Attornies.

The Committees of Supply and Ways and Means were postponed till Monday.

Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *February 20.*

Heard counsel in the Appeal of Curtis and others, assignees of Gibbon and Johnstone, appellants; Chippendale, trustee for the estate of M^r Alpin and Co. respondents. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *February 20.*

CONTESTED ELECTIONS.

Mr. *Gregor*, chairman of the Committee for trying the merits of the Downton election, made his report from the said Committee;

That the fitting Members were duly elected;

That

That the Petition against the said return was not frivolous nor vexatious ;

That the opposition of the sitting Members to the said Petition was not frivolous nor vexatious.

Mr. *Canning* brought up the Subsidiary Treaty between his Majesty and the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, which was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Fox* said, that the House had already experienced the difficulty of procuring the attendance necessary upon the occasion of the late ballot, and as no compulsory measure could be employed, and as two ballots were to come on the next day, he was afraid that the same difficulty would again occur. If it was impossible in the present case to adopt any compulsory measure to procure attendance, it would be proper at least to put off the last of the two till Wednesday, when for that of Tuesday there would be a greater probability of finding an attendance for one than if both were to take place. Though he understood it to be the wish of the parties, that the subject, the Petition on the Tewkesbury election, should be discussed as soon as possible, no inconvenience he apprehended could arise from the delay of a single day. He would therefore move, " That the order for taking the Tewkesbury Election Petition into consideration the next day, should be discharged, and renewed for Wednesday."

Mr. *Pitt* doubted whether this would answer the purpose intended. He thought it would be better to put off one of the Petitions till Thursday, and then postpone one of those fixed for that day till next week.

Mr. *Fox* said, that from the difficulty of procuring an attendance of Members necessary for the ballots, great inconvenience might arise to public business, and on this account he thought it would be proper to distribute the Petitions in such a manner as not to deter Gentlemen from attending, by presenting the appearance of two ballots upon one day.

Mr. *Wigley* said, that considerable inconvenience would arise should the motion be carried, because it would require new warrants for the attendance of witnesses, which would of course derange the whole course of the proceedings, for which the parties had prepared themselves.

The *Speaker* stated that the learned Gentleman was correct, and that this inconvenience would necessarily ensue.

After a few words from Mr. Bragge, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Fox, the motion was withdrawn.

SOUTHWARK

SOUTHWARK ELECTION.

Mr. *Henry Thornton* brought up a Petition from a number of the electors of the borough of Southwark. He said, that the petitioners complained of their being laid under a considerable hardship by that decision; that they did not, however, complain of the hardship of that part of it by which Mr. Thelluffon was declared ineligible, much less did they complain of the decision of the former Committee, who had only determined in the manner in which, as he (Mr. Thornton) thought, they were bound to do by the Treating Act, by making void Mr. Thelluffon's election. What his constituents complained of was, that part of the decision of the last Committee affected their own rights, by not merely unseating Mr. Thelluffon, but by seating Mr. Tierney, on the principle that all those votes were thrown away which had been given to Mr. Thelluffon on this second election. Mr. Thornton stated, that the petitioners conceived that they ought to have had an opportunity of knowing the ineligibility of Mr. Thelluffon before they were construed to have thus thrown away their votes, by voting for him. They alledged in the petition, that, on Mr. Thelluffon's offering himself a second time, they had taken all the means in their power to inform themselves whether he was eligible or not; that on consulting the Treating Act, they saw nothing that in their minds could imply ineligibility; that all the lawyers who were consulted considered him as eligible; that the House of Commons itself also had implied the same thing by their decision in the Norwich case; that, moreover, the bailiff of the Borough, who was the returning officer, had assured the electors that he had taken counsel's opinion, and that they might safely vote for Mr. Thelluffon; that, under these circumstances, the petitioners thought it a considerable hardship that they should be condemned to be represented by a person who had not been chosen by a majority of the electors of Southwark, but who had merely the votes of a minority. Mr. Thornton, however, remarked, that in his opinion no question whatever could be raised as to the conclusiveness of every part of the decision of the late Committee, and that he believed the petitioners had little or no difference of opinion from him in this respect. They prayed, indeed, that the House would take into its consideration, whether any part of that decision could be brought under its deliberations; but if not, that they would take such measures as to the House might seem fit for maintaining the rights of electors in future cases. Mr. Thornton said, there were two measures of the legislative kind which, he conceived, ought to be taken by

VOL. II. 1797. C the

the House, with a view to remedy any like hardships in future. First, he stated the law to be deficient, at present, in not allowing election petitions to be presented by electors who were on the same side with the sitting Member. The law entrusted to the sitting Member alone the interests of the electors on the same side with him, even in cases where those electors had an interest distinct from the sitting Member; that in the present case, for instance, after the Committee had decided that Mr. Thellusson was not duly elected, there remained a further question to be tried, namely, whether Mr. Tierney should be seated, or whether there should be a new election? The other measure which he thought it might become the House to take, was that of explaining and amending the Treating Act, or passing a declaratory law, in order to ascertain what was to be the future construction of it. As the matter stood at present, there was decision against decision. In the Norwich case, before mentioned, the Treating Act did not inflict ineligibility, and the sitting Member remained seated. In the present case, the Committee had resolved the direct contrary. In this respect he conceived, therefore, that the House could have no objection (in conformity, indeed, with what had been proposed already by an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Whitbread) who had served on one of the Southwark Committees), to let a bill be introduced to clear up the point either one way or the other; and he saw no particular objection himself to let ineligibility follow every conviction of having treated, if that seemed the disposition of the House. Mr. Thornton next adverted to the present partial and defective operations of the Treating Act, and it seemed a hardship in particular cases, in consequence of its being evaded in so many others. Many of his constituents, for instance, thought it hard that what they had seen done so often in the cities of London and Westminster, in the town of Guildford, and in a variety of other places, without any penal consequences following from it, should in their case have deprived them of the representative chosen by the majority, and should have fixed on them a person having only a minority of votes. One ordinary and often very effectual means of evading the law, was the delaying to pay the bills for treating till after the 14 days expired, within which the House required every petition to be presented. In the Southwark case it had been stated to him, that Mr. Thellusson had suffered chiefly through his having ventured to pay his bills before the ordinary period, which he was said also to have been led to do by some words which dropt from Mr. Tierney, and which Mr. Thellusson happened

happened to have construed into an implication that there would be no petition. Mr. Thornton declared, that he anxiously wished that some means might be devised of securing an universal attention to the requisitions of the Treating Act, instead of that partial and accidental enforcement of it which now took place. He professed himself a friend to that act, and to the utmost purity that could be introduced into elections in every respect.

He concluded by observing, that the petition in his hand was signed by about 1150 electors, which was a greater number by about 20 or 30 than had voted for Mr. Tierney.

The Petition was then brought up, read, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that it was certainly unpleasant for him to observe the insinuations which this petition contained. He had hoped, that if ever any man had procured a seat in that House upon fair constitutional grounds, he was that person. He therefore felt it unpleasant, that the mode in which he had obtained his seat in the House should daily in the newspapers be reprobated as unconstitutional, and he wished for an opportunity to meet the imputation. He differed from the Honourable Gentleman who said the petition contained the sense of the electors of Southwark. A public meeting called for the avowed purpose was the proper mode of collecting the sense of the electors: but here no such thing had taken place. Private letters had been sent round to those who were supposed to be hostile to his interest, and in this way the signatures to the petition had been procured. He hoped the Honourable Gentleman would name some day for taking this petition into consideration, and move something specific upon its general prayer. He wished most anxiously that his real situation in the House should be ascertained. He could have wished that the Honourable Gentleman, who indeed had informed him that the petition was to be presented, had likewise apprised him of its contents, for till then he was totally ignorant of its purport; he therefore hoped that a day would be named, when he should have an opportunity of replying to the petition, so far as it regarded himself.

Mr. *Thornton* said, that he had been merely the organ of the body of his constituents, by whom the petition was presented, and only explained the sentiments it contained; that as to any thing which had fallen from him which seemed to reflect on the decision of the Committee, or on the manner of the Honourable Gentleman's obtaining his seat in Parliament, he conceived he had no right to make any motion on the sub-

ject. The decision of the late Committee was final, and was not a matter of debate; the prospective measures to be taken were therefore the only ones of which he had any notice to give to the House.

Mr. *Tierney* hoped that a petition containing reflections upon him would not be suffered to lie upon the table without any further proceeding, thereby giving an opportunity to newspapers to be filled from day to day with scurrilous paragraphs against him, without giving him an opportunity of making his defence. He wished to obtain his seat constitutionally, and as he hoped and trusted he had done so, if no further steps were taken in respect to that Petition, he might some day be induced to declare, that, under the mask of a petition, an insult had been offered to a Member of that House.

Mr. *Henniker Major* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Vagrant Act. Granted.

Mr. *Wigley* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the act relative to the duty on Attornies' Clerks. Granted.

Mr. *D. Parker Coke* moved for the second reading of the Bill for the better trying of offences within certain local jurisdictions and towns corporate. He stated the difficulty which had been felt in the distribution of justice, from the prejudices which sometimes existed where the jury was composed of persons residing in the neighbourhood of those who were to be tried. The principle of the Bill was to enable persons within limited jurisdictions to apply to the county at large. In several places of this description too, in Pool, Hull, and Southampton, it was the practice to allow the prisons to be full before the prisoners were brought to trial, from which great oppression and inconvenience arose.

Mr. *Jeffery* (of Pool) said, that within his recollection no such grievance had existed at Pool. He did not think that ever more than three persons were confined at once for offences of the description to which this bill was to apply previous to their being brought to trial. He was not, however, hostile to the principle of the bill.

After a few words from Mr. *Wigley* the Bill was read a second time, and committed to Mr. *Coke*, the Master of the Rolls, &c. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, February 21.

The House, in a Committee of Privileges, heard counsel on the Petition of the Earl of Lauderdale against the return of the

the Gentleman styling himself Earl of Errol, as one of the sixteen Peers of Scotland.

The Petition being read,

Mr. *Adam*, in a very able speech, opened the case upon the part of the petitioner, and from the arguments he should advance, and the evidence he should produce, he trusted he would be able to support the objections which had been urged to the right of the Gentleman styling himself Earl of Errol to sit as one of the representatives of the Scots Peerage. The argument was confined entirely to a question of law, the substance of which seemed to be as follows.—After enumerating the different charters of the Earls of Errol from the year 1581 to the year 1666, in which the line of succession was confined to heirs male, Mr. Adam particularly adverted to the charter in 1666 to Gilbert, Earl of Errol, proceeding upon a resignation of the estate and honours made by Gilbert into the hands of King Charles II. In consequence of this resignation, a charter, proceeding upon a signature perfectly regular and formal, was in 1666 granted by the Crown of the estate and honours to Earl Gilbert and his heirs male, to his heirs female, to any person or persons he should name to be his heirs in the honours by any writing under his hand; the persons so named failing, or in case the Earl made no nomination to the heirs male of tailzie, and provisions mentioned in the former investitures of his estate, to the Earl's heirs male whatsoever, to his heirs female whatsoever. This charter, so far as it went, constituted a title to the honours. The limitation in the line of succession, and the liberty given to Earl Gilbert, were however of unusual latitude. Earl Gilbert died without issue, and was succeeded by Sir John Hay, of Killour, his nearest heir male. This Sir John Hay, it was to be observed, was equally entitled to the estate and honours, by former investitures, as by the charter 1666, and independently of any new deed of institution. John, as Earl of Errol, sat in several Parliaments from the year 1681 to 1705. It was the presumption of law that his doing so was upon the old investitures, and as heir male in general to Sir Gilbert. It was unknown to the petitioner whether Earl Gilbert made any nomination in consequence of the power contained in the charter of 1666. No such nomination, however, had ever been published or recognized, nor had appeared in any register. That he made not one only, but several nominations, prior to 1674, and that he made a settlement or tailzie of his estate, appeared from a charter that passed the great seal 4th of March, 1674. Neither the dates of the instruments of nomination,

nor

nor of the settlement, nor their tenor, were mentioned in that charter. The charter concluded with the royal promise to cause it to be ratified next session of Parliament. An act of ratification was indeed passed in 1681, in favour of the Earl of Errol, but it related entirely to the office of Constable, without saying a word of the Peerage. That the Earl considered both the dignity and estate as male fees, likewise appeared very strongly from the circumstances, that on his purchasing the barony of Dalgelly, and other considerable estates, he obtained a charter of *novodamus* under the royal sign manual, anxiously providing them to him and his heirs male and of tailzie succeeding to him in his title, dignity, and estate. As these traces of his having taken upon the charter of 1674, the natural conclusion was, that no idea existed of extending the fee to the female line. There were but two grounds on which the Gentleman styling himself Earl of Errol could support his pretensions: either by maintaining the charter of 1674 as a valid grant of the honours, which, in consequence of the failure of heirs male of the body of Sir John Hay, have thus come to him as entitled by the next remainder "to the heirs female of Sir John's body," or by founding upon the remainder in the charter 1666, "to the nominees of Earl Gilbert, coupled with some instrument, now for the first time to be brought forward as the nomination of Earl Gilbert, in exercise of the powers with which by that charter he was vested."

With regard to the charter of 1674, it was evidently defective, either as a grant intended to convey the dignity, or estate. There was no procuratory of resignation, and it was besides defective in the necessary formalities. The resignation was made in the hands of the Commissioners of the Treasury, and dated, not at the residence of the Sovereign, but at Edinburgh; of course there neither was nor could be a warrant for a grant under the royal sign manual, and it was an established point, that honours could not be granted either originally, or *de novo*, without the interposition of the Sovereign himself, testified by his actual signature. It had been found, however, that in various cases a cashet had been employed in renewing or creating honours in Scotland, a practice which gave great offence to James the First, in consequence of which strict orders were issued against this cashet, which had been used in several cases, and, among others, in that of the Earl of Errol's charter. The objection, however, when urged, had always been sustained by their Lordships, particularly in the cases of Cassilis and Ochiltree. The charter, therefore, upon
this

this ground, was invalid. This extraordinary charter, too, contrary to the feudal principles, at once conveyed and retained the honours, and laboured under so many informalties and nullities as rendered it totally insufficient for the conveyance of the dignity or estate.

The charter of 1666 then must be that by which the descent of the Peerage is to be governed. The title was first taken up on the charter of 1674, by Mary, the sister of Earl Charles, upon his death in 1717, and as she lived till 1759, there was no proper opportunity for any person interested objecting to the assumption till the father of the present Gentleman took it, a possession too short, he presumed, to found any solid claim. There was no other deed but this conveying to females; for if the claim was made under the charter of 1666, she would have been excluded by a different branch. If any nomination took place by Earl Gilbert, no such thing had yet been produced. But even if there were, it was a principle established in the case of Stair, that such nomination must have the royal confirmation in order to render it valid. In this case the principle applied with additional force. The power of nomination under the charter of 1666 was so unlimited, the conditions were so extraordinary, that it was impossible they could be valid without something to shew that they had been approved by the Crown. That had not been done, nor could it now be supplied, as the articles of union disabled the Crown from doing any thing in the creation or renewing of honours in Scotland. With regard to the consequence of the Gentleman now styling himself Earl of Errol being deprived of the situation he now held, he conceived that the petitioner, the Earl of Lauderdale, must be entitled to it. This discussion, however, it was not necessary at present to agitate, because in that event the Earl of Errol could have no interest in the question, as he would then have ceased to be a member of the Scots Peerage. Mr. Adam concluded with saying, that he hoped he had opened his case with that respect for their Lordships which he ever wished to testify, and that civility to the Gentleman, whose title he objected to, which his character deserved. Mr. Adam then produced the different documents on which the case rested, which were ordered to be printed, and the farther hearing to proceed next Tuesday.

The House was then resumed, and several private bills read.
—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *February 21.*

Two ballots took place for Committees to try the merits of the Canterbury and Tewkesbury elections.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *February 22.*

Read the Bills on the table, &c.—Heard counsel on the Scots Appeal. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *February 22.*

Mr. *W. Dundas* moved, at the request both of the sitting Member and the Petitioner, that the ballot on the election for the borough of Inverkeithing be discharged from the next day, and fixed for Thursday the 16th of March. Ordered.

Mr. *Whitbread* put off his motion, which stood for Friday, at the request of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, till Monday next.

SOUTHWARK ELECTION.

Colonel *Porter* stated, that he had that morning read the Southwark Petition with great care, and as it seemed to him to convey some strong reflections against the Committee, of which he had the honour to be a member, he gave notice, that on Thursday se'nnight he should submit a motion upon the subject, if no more efficient member of that Committee came forward before that time.

CORN.

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* gave notice, that on Friday next he should move for some indemnity to the Merchants, who, by importing grain into the country at a time of great public scarcity, have sustained very heavy losses.

The order of the day for the House resolving itself into a Committee on the Quakers' Bill being read, it was put off till Friday, on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Committee on the Inland Navigation Bill was deferred till this day se'nnight.

The Bill for enabling the East India Company to raise money by encreasing their capital, was read a second time, and ordered to be committed the next day. Adjourned.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* moved, that the ballot for a Committee to try the merits of the Shrewsbury election, which stood for the next day, should, on account of the circuits, be put off till Thursday the 20th of April.—Ordered. Adjourned.

HOUSE

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, *February 23.*

Heard counsel and gave judgment, reversing the judgment of the Court of Session, the assignees of Gibson and Johnstone, against the trustees of M'Alpine and Co.

The different Bills on the table passed their various stages.—
Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *February 23.*

Mr. *Powys* gave notice, that the next day he intended to move for leave to bring in a Bill to explain and amend the Act passed two years ago, with regard to the equalization of weights and measures.

The Members to try the merits of the Carlisle Election Petition were balloted for.

Petitions were presented from the Surgeons' Company, Tower Hill Sewers, Banbury Roads, Frodsham, Hilham, Selby, Gelding, Mordon, Moorlinch, and Harlington Inclosures.

A Petition was presented from Marybone Vestry, against the Poor Bill.—Referred to the Committee on the Bill.

Several Petitions were presented by Mr. *Mainwaring*, from the Tower Hamlets, and places adjacent, against both Wet Dock Bills.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *February 24.*

Mr. *Mainwaring* presented a Petition from the parishes of St. Giles, and Mary, Whitechapel, praying for a more equal assessment of the Poor Rates. The Petition was referred to a Committee.

Mr. *D. P. Coke* brought up a report from a select Committee on the Local Jurisdiction Bill, which was ordered to be taken into consideration in a Committee of the whole House on Thursday next.

A Petition was presented from the parish of Islington against the Poor Bill, which was ordered to be laid upon the table.

Lord *Hawkebury* and another Gentleman were ordered to wait upon the Rev. Dr. Powis, to request him to preach before the House of Commons on the Fast Day, on the 8th of March next.

On the motion of Mr. *Grey*, the ballot for the Committee on the election for the county of Kent, which stood for Thursday next, was postponed, on account of the Circuits, till Thursday the 4th of April.

Mr. *Harrison* gave notice, that on Tuesday se'nnight he would move for a Committee to consider of a mode of reducing the public expenditure, by a retrenchment of offices and sinecure places.

MERCANTILE INDEMNITY.

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* rose to state the grounds of a motion, of which he had given notice on a former day, for a Committee to investigate the causes and the amount of the losses which had been sustained by the merchants who had, in a time of public scarcity, supplied the country with corn, and to consider if there were any mode of indemnifying them for these losses. He was aware that, in proposing this motion, he had to encounter a strong general principle, to which it was certainly proper in most cases to adhere. He considered himself, however, as warranted to state the present instance as one of those which might fairly be urged as an exception to the common rule. He declared that, in bringing forward the subject, he was neither the advocate of the sufferers, nor a complainant of personal damage, but actuated by a sincere desire to promote the peace of the country, and an ardent zeal to encourage that public spirit, by which alone, in critical emergencies, it could be preserved. He was entirely unacquainted with those individuals who had suffered in consequence of their exertions in importing grain into the country, at a time when it was threatened with one of the greatest calamities incident to man; and therefore he felt for them only as he would feel for others who had been subjected to a severe and ruinous loss. But it was extremely necessary for the House, overlooking all individual considerations, to take care that those who by their spirited and patriotic exertions had afforded seasonable relief to the country, should not be subjected to such a loss as might in future discourage and check that spirit from which the public as a body had so eminently benefited. When the scarcity prevailed, the purchases made by Government were found to be very inadequate to supply the demands of the market. It was therefore found adviseable to encourage private speculation, in importing an article of the first necessity then so much wanted. Prompted by a desire of supplying the existing wants of the country, and encouraged by the inducements held forth by the legislature, the merchants imported a vast quantity of corn on their own account; the consequence of

of which was, the price fell between 60 and 70 per cent. In 1795, before individuals engaged in the speculation, Government imported only 250,000 quarters, whereas in 1796 there were not less than 700,000 quarters imported. This, however, was not all; his argument derived strong collateral aid from the interference of Government in the market. By supplying the market regularly every week with a certain quantity of corn at a certain price, the merchants were of course under the necessity of selling what they had imported at the same price, and thus were deprived of those profits which, from the state of the country, they had been given to expect. Upon these grounds he hoped the House would be disposed to grant them some relief; he therefore moved, "That a Committee be appointed to investigate the causes and the amount of the losses sustained by the merchants in importing corn into this country at a time of great public scarcity, and to consider of some mode of indemnifying them for these losses."

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he did not mean to oppose the appointment of a Committee; he hoped, however, that it would be an open one. He rose merely to ask the worthy Alderman one question. He had no doubt that the merchants, who engaged in the speculation of importing grain, were influenced by views of personal interest, as well as by motives of public spirit. He wished however to know, whether, if the harvest had failed, and the price of corn of course had risen, they would have given up any part of their profits to the public?

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* explained, that he did not mean to state that the merchants had been guided in their speculations solely by disinterested motives; but he contended that they were urged and impelled by Government to enter into the speculation; and that as they had sustained severe losses by yielding to this impulse, they had a fair and just claim to indemnity. As to what would have happened if the price of corn had risen instead of falling, he was fully convinced that, had this unfortunately been the case, the situation of the country would have been truly deplorable, for he doubted, much inclined as the people were to obey the laws, whether they would have remained long in subjection to them, had the price of bread continued to rise after it was fifteen pence the quartern loaf.

An open Committee was appointed to consider the motion.

Mr. *Powys* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to explain and amend an act passed two years ago for regulating Weights and Measures. Leave was given.

QUAKERS' BILL.

The order of the day for the House resolving itself into a Committee of the whole House on a Bill for granting relief to the people called Quakers, respecting the mode of process against them for payment of tythes, and for taking their solemn affirmation in criminal as well as civil cases, being read, and the question being put, that the Speaker leave the chair,

Sir *W. Scott* rose to oppose the motion, upon the ground of various objections to the Bill which he begged leave to enumerate, and add, by way of explanation, that they respected that part of it which related to the payment of tythes, more than that respecting the affirmation of Quakers in certain cases of criminal jurisprudence: he should rely upon the abilities of those Gentlemen who were better acquainted with the operation, and more deeply interested in the issue of the latter, for a due consideration of the effects which any alteration might produce. He hoped he should be justified in giving his opposition to any alteration in the payment of tythes, though no enemy to liberal and good-humoured toleration. Where toleration was given to any set of religious principles, or religious opinions, which by their practice were injurious to the rights of other men, and to the rights of civil society, he thought the inconvenience of such a practice ought rather to fall upon the persons who caused it by their religious opinions, than on those from whose establishments they differed. The Quakers were the people who created inconvenience by their religious differences from the establishment of others, and yet these were the people who desired to be relieved from the inconveniences which they themselves created, and to impose the burden upon others. The toleration which the Quakers solicited affected the rights of property, inasmuch as they wished to be exempted from the present and established mode of paying tythes. Tythes were property; they constituted a part of the rights of civil society, and were the property of the persons entitled to them. A great part of them was lay-property, and were classed under the title of lay-impropriations. They did not belong to any ecclesiastical incumbent, but were the possessions of lay-corporations, universities, and colleges, or other purchasers. There were leases of tythes which descended in families from generation to generation, upon easy renewals, and these leases amounted to one-half of the collective property of tythes. In such case, therefore, it was evident from religious scruples the Quakers not only refused the payment of tythes to the ecclesiastical incumbent, but to the Lay-impropriator; and that they were guilty by
their

their practice of a violation upon property and the civil rights of society, though the present mode of paying tythes had been established 300 years ago, and long before the persuasion of Quakers was published or professed. Whether tythes were lay-property or not, they were, he contended, property, and property of a nature too which was more anxiously guarded by the wisdom of the legislature than any other. The Quakers acknowledged this law, and they acknowledged the rights of property also, which it protected, and yet they withheld the payment of the tythes which constituted a part of it. Would it not be odd, if a man had purchased an estate, and willingly paid down nine-tenths of the purchase money, but put the tenth part in his pocket, because he alledged that it was an article of his faith to do so? And yet, however ridiculous such a proposition might appear, it was the avowed practice of the Quakers. Opinions of the present day were not, however, to be measured by any standard of reason or justice, and this was one of that description. He conceived that he did not lose sight of that profession when he asserted, that the religious opinions of the Quakers affected the rights of civil property. He wished, therefore, to submit to the consideration of the House, how far it would be proper to accede to the requisition of the Quakers, and vary the regulation of civil property—and how far they ought to allow people in general to find occasion, by an act of the legislature, to recognize such a principle as the non-payment of tythes, on account of the religious fancies of particular persons. The House would be pleased to observe, that the title and preamble of the Bill were stated to be for the relief of Quakers from the payment of tythes (not only to ecclesiastical incumbents, but to lay-impropriators also, who may have given a value for those tythes), and to extend the relief provided for them by a former act of Parliament. He begged to have the act read, and particularly the 4th clause of the 7th of King William and Queen Mary, ch. 34, which being done, he said he considered that act as an act for the relief of the owners of tythes instead of Quakers, and commented on the manner of our ancestors in treating the objections of the Quakers as *pretended scruples*, entertaining no doubt but their own language expressed their own ideas.—He did not wish to use invidious terms, but certainly, according to his construction, that act appeared to consider the withholding of the payment of tythes, on account of the pretended scruples of conscience in the Quakers, as a trespass upon property and the rights of civil society; and he had a right to say, that, according to the whole form and tenor of it, he considered

dered it to be not an act provided for the relief of Quakers, in certain cases of conscience, against the persecution of possessors of tythe property, but an act for the relief of other men in the possession of tythe property against the persecution of Quakers; because he who with-holds the property of another man must be the persecutor, and not the man who seeks by law to recover his right. Taking it in that view, therefore, that the legislature protected the payment of tythes, when due, he desired to ask the House whether it would be prudent to vary that policy? If the policy were varied, he should be glad to know where the principle would end? Who could say to what extent such conscientious fancies might not run? The present was the time, as he had before observed, for wild opinions, and some persons might hereafter scruple to pay rent on the same principle, and, by a powerful imagination, convert texts of scripture to support their doctrine. So might they proceed with debts too, and contend that they "owe nought but love." Gentlemen must know that the most fanciful and dangerous doctrines had of late been published, and that one or two pamphlets had been distributed at the door of that House, in which the nobility and corporate societies, the lawyers and the clergy, had been pelted with texts of holy writ as so many monopolizers, violators, and oppressors.—These wild opinions excite the derision and disgust of all who hear them, and such is the fanciful objection of the Quakers. If you tell the Quakers this is irrational, will any of them venture to defend it upon reason? No; he refers the matter to his own opinion, and the ground of that is removed from your investigation. You may say he is insincere in his religious scruples. That, he will observe, is a matter between God and his own conscience, and you may remain as ignorant as before. But if you tell him he is interested to put the money in his pocket, and that you must compel him to refund it, he submits to the compulsion in spite of all his scruples. It was the duty of the House, therefore, to deliberate before it gave a legislative sanction to fancies, and to projects which were at once novel, incommodious, and evasive; otherwise it would create and invite the multiplication of similar fancies, which would immediately spring up in the most prolific and alarming manner. The House was to recollect, that its indulgence was called for on account of the particular opinions of a certain class of individuals, but when that indulgence was once granted, it was not a certain class of individuals who, because they wear no button upon their hats, and decline the use of the second person plural, that were exclusively to enjoy it,

it, but every man who has a religious scruple, or pretends to have one. If this principle were once admitted, the anti-tythe christians would be the most flourishing sect in Britain.

He begged to call the attention of the House to the consideration of the proposition on another ground. It was alledged by the advocates of the proposed regulation, that it was adviseable, not merely for the benefit of the Quakers, but for the benefit of the tythe-holders, and for facilitating the recovery of tythes. If such were likely to be the effect of the Bill, he could not think that the Quakers, who refused the payment of tythes upon religious principles, would have solicited for the better and more efficacious mode of paying them, nor could such a declaration be credited by any one. With what consistency such a system of action and re-action could be made, he left it to the Honourable and learned Gentleman (Mr. Serjeant Adair) to explain. If they solicited the regulation, it must be for reasons of a contrary import; because the recovery of tythes was the very ground of their resistance. But grant that this regulation would facilitate the recovery of tythes. The Quakers cannot conscientiously pay tythes without compulsion. Then it becomes necessary to adapt the modes of compulsion to the demands of their conscience, and in such a case compulsion must be used; and compulsion will remain compulsion for ever. This mode then would either facilitate the recovery of tythes, or it would not; and the Quakers would hereafter either pay with a suit, or they would pay without one; and that they might do at present, without any further regulation. He would suppose, however, that they would not pay tythes without a suit, and then let the House observe, to what a situation they would put a man who had any demand upon them. He must be under the actual necessity of going to law every time to recover what the law undoubtedly gives him. What would be the complaints of Gentlemen, if they were obliged to resort to such a mode of proceeding to recover the payment of rents from their tenants; or what would be the distress and difficulty of merchants to recover the payment of monies, due from their agents and correspondents, in such a slow and inconvenient manner? The business of the world could never be conducted upon such a principle; nor could the Government of this country subsist if such proceedings should be tolerated. When any person refuses to obey the laws and customs of civil society, the remedy ought to be prompt and efficacious, and such as should be able to protect the property of individuals from invasion in future. By the mode suggested,
the

the reverse would be the case, and the claimants of property in suing for their right would be obliged perpetually to incur expence and inconvenience with trouble and anxiety. To make a man an owner of suits instead of property would be deplorable, and he hoped such an obligation would never be enforced. But to consider the question the other way, was it not true that the Quaker at present pays the tythes without compulsion? Surely he pays them voluntarily, although, perhaps, he pays them under the apprehension of compulsion. Tythes are paid the same as rents and taxes, under the knowledge that the law would be called in if necessary to enforce them. He desired, therefore, to ask whether by placing the remedy at a greater distance, the payment would not be less prompt and efficacious? It is impossible it should be otherwise. In the present case, what was the remedy proposed? It directed that the payment should be made *in persona* of the Quaker? Whether the payment was made directly into the hands of the tythe-holder, or collaterally laid down upon a table in his presence for him to take up as his right, whatever might be the opinion of the Quaker in such a transaction, was in the opinion of reason and of law the same thing in effect, since the Quaker thereby actually made the payment. Instead of this mode of proceeding, the general intent of the proposed regulation was to take the payment from the person of the Quaker, and levy it upon his property. Thus the tythe-holder would be obliged to resort to the district in which the Quaker lived, or to any other place, however remote, where his property was lodged, to recover his demands; and thus a person living in Northumberland might be obliged to traverse to the further corner of the kingdom to regain his right by sequestration. The laws of sequestration could be better described by other Gentlemen than him, since it hitherto had formed no part of the proceedings in the ecclesiastical court, and he hoped it never would form any, since it would be extremely inconvenient to compel the tythe-holder to proceed year after year regularly for the recovery of his right by sequestration.

If the Bill were to pass, it would tend to produce such a diminution of the tythes as would amount to a diminution of their value. On no principle of facilitating the recovery of the payment of tythes could it be meant, nor did the Quakers wish to protect them. It was true, indeed, that he had heard it said, the Quakers were desirous of paying the tythes,
but

but could not do it because their conscience interfered, If the fact were so, he was not unwilling to allow that a remedy against their property would be desirable, but still he conceived it would be impossible to leave the remedy more commodious and efficacious than at present. The fundamental provisions of the Bill left a personal sequestration it was true, but that was an onerous and inconvenient process, and unfortunately there was little hope or probability of recovery without it. It was said, the Quaker would admit the inconvenience, and feel it his interest rather to pay the tythes, than submit to a sequestration. According to this mode of reasoning the honourable and learned Gentleman seemed to forget the principles on which the Bill was constructed, for it had previously been argued, that the Quakers would not pay without compulsion, and it was not to enforce the laws of sequestration, but to recover the payment of the tythes that the regulation was proposed. The end, therefore was forgetful of the beginning, and he conceived the Bill could not upon such principles receive support.

It was pretended, that the leading intent of this bill was to relieve impropiators from appealing to courts of law, by appealing to Justices of the Peace, except in cases of discovery. There were many objections to that policy. In the first place, the claimants would still have the option of appealing to the Judges, as well as Justices of Peace, but they must do it under the menace of losing costs; for if it should afterwards be found that they had brought a cause before the Judges, except a case of discovery which might have been decided by the Justices of Peace, they were not to be entitled to their costs, and every judicial proceeding that acted under such a menace, ought to be reprobated. He desired to know also whether, upon any reasonable calculation, the single case of discovery was the only case in which a resort should be made to a superior court of law? He conceived the magnitude of the property concerned would prove the contrary.—There were many lay-estates which consisted entirely in tythes, and he wished to know upon what grounds the proprietors should be compelled to resort to Justices of the Peace to have the *quantum* decided. He knew that in tythe causes there were long and intricate accounts to be taken, and he did not see why the Magistrates of the county were to be burthened with them. Nor were the length and intricacy of the accounts only to be considered, but the delicacy and nicety of their nature. It was a matter not to be

dissembled, that tythes were obnoxious to popular prejudices, both general and local. He had no intention to speak with disrespect of Magistrates, but they were not exempt from the infirmities of human nature, and the laws were so sensible of this, that they would not suffer a Judge of Assize to sit in his own county, lest his decision should be swayed by his private feelings. One great end of the administration of justice was the satisfaction of the suitor, and if he were not at liberty to change his mode of application, the end of justice would be disappointed. He knew that discovery was the best evidence, but was it to be demanded that the defendant in a tythe cause should surrender at the outset? It was neither useful nor supplementary, and yet unless the impropiator undertook to be as wise in the beginning of the cause, as the Judges after hearing all the evidence were actually at the end, he never could with certainty decide whether the appeal might or might not be made to a superior court. What were the grounds then on which the necessity and expediency of a variation from an established use depended? From the vehemence with which the prosecution of this business was pushed, it might be supposed that the clergy were calling down the vengeance of heaven on the Quakers. Holding a situation in one class of the courts of law which had of late been much misrepresented: he was sensible that much misrepresentation was afloat. He trusted, however, that he could satisfy the House that no hardships had been inflicted under their agency upon these persons. During the last twenty years in the ecclesiastical court for the diocese of Canterbury there had not been one prosecution. In the diocese of Bristol there had been only two, against the same person (William Stratton) who paid the tythes immediately in consequence of the citation. One of the citations was instituted by the Rev. William Davy, and the other by the Honourable Henry Thane, the lay-impropiator. In the diocese of Coventry, six Quakers had been served with citations, some from the earl of Dartmouth the impropiator, and others from a clergyman who first applied to the local Magistrates, but because of some private pique against him they were unwilling to act, he afterwards resorted to a court of law. The Quakers, however acquiesced, and no imprisonment took place. In the diocese of Worcester there had been only one prosecution, instituted by the rector of Teddington, in which imprisonment took place on the refusal of the defendant to
answer

answer the citation, but he was soon after liberated on account of some informality in the writ. Thus there had been only one man imprisoned during the last twenty years by the ecclesiastical courts, and he was soon released. In the exchequer, the persons cited were but few in number, as would be stated by persons conversant with the proceedings of that court, tho' such an unjust clamour had been raised about them. The whole of the injustice in that court was on the side of the Quakers. The clergyman who instituted the cause against them had applied to the Justices, but was dissatisfied with their award, and he was rightly dissatisfied because it was improper. He was therefore under the necessity of resorting to a superior court, and a great clamour was raised in consequence, because he did not proceed against them one after the other, which he had no right to do, as he had no occasion to impose the task upon himself to fight a hydra, which, as often as destroyed, would rise again and present a new head. He therefore proceeded against them all, and they set up a *modus* in defence, which was another mode of paying tythes. Such litigious distinctions and religious fancies he contended, did not deserve the interference of the legislature, especially on principles by which the laws of civil society could never be supported. Tythes ought to be paid in an easy and efficacious manner, if they were to be paid at all, and the remedies ought to be instant and efficacious. On what grounds then was the House called to alter the present mode? They were called upon to introduce a new system, by which every demand of tythes would be followed by a law-suit, and the multiplicity of law-suits would weaken the spring of law in a double *ratio*, for as they encreased in number, they would lessen its force and energy. Sir William said, he could not conceive new measures would answer while the old ones were so smooth and easy. He imputed no improper motives to the learned Serjeant, but there were many opinions adverse to tythes, and if the present toleration were allowed, he doubted not to see them all immediately brought forward in different shapes. He saw no Petitions from any other quarter at present, but it was no improbable speculation that there might be, and he could not be inattentive to notions disadvantageous to property, as such motions would attack it where it was most vulnerable, and most obnoxious to popular prejudices. It was in this manner the late unhappy change of things began in another country. Tythes

were among the first objects of abuse and execration, then followed lordships and manors: Titles and successions suffered next, and lastly that extraordinary and lamentable convulsion which has shaken Europe and the world. Upon these grounds he opposed the Speaker's leaving the chair.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* said, that after the discussions which this subject had last year undergone, after the bill which he had the honour to bring in had obtained the approbation of the House with considerable deliberation, though without a single division; after the discussion which had been provoked upon the subject throughout the kingdom, he confessed that he was a little surprised that in this stage, for the first time, any thing like a serious objection had been urged against the measure. His learned friend had prefaced his opposition with an apology personal to him—an apology by no means necessary. Whenever the mind was enlightened, from whatever that light proceeded, it ought, in preference to every consideration, to direct a public man in the discharge of his duty. He acquitted his learned friend from the imputation of being guided by any other motives than those grave considerations which he himself assigned; he knew his candour and honour too well to suppose any other; it was better, however, instead of stopping to enquire how the motives of his opposition had thus late arisen, to examine the weight of the arguments he had employed. The bill, when originally introduced, had undergone considerable discussion, and received several alterations, to which he had acceded rather in compliance with the wishes of others than his own judgment; he had likewise thought it better to introduce the bill into the present Parliament, in the shape in which it had obtained the approbation of the last, than under its original form. With regard to the principle of his learned friend, on which he founded his objection to the measure, that no respect ought to be shewn to religious scruples where they went to affect property, he could not agree with him to the extent in which it had been stated. He thought that some respect ought to be shewn even to those religious scruples which might be considered as absurd, though they involved this consequence, and they might even be the object of that good natured toleration which his learned friend had mentioned. His learned friend said, that to such scruples the legislature ought not at all to yield. He admitted that the legislature ought not so far to yield to them as to lessen the security

security of property, but yet he thought it wise, humane, and just to give such indulgence as was consistent with its most perfect security. Alterations in the laws which tended to afford ease to the person who entertained the scruple, without injuring the property which it regarded, he would contend, were wise, humane, and just, and till his learned friend could shew that the present bill would actually produce the effect which he deprecated, he would not consent to the application of his principle. An expression in the act of King William, on which this measure was founded, had been quoted by his learned Friend. The conduct of that Parliament, by which that act had been passed, it would appear, however, was more liberal than their language. The scruples of the Quakers were called *pretended*. He believed that these scruples were perfectly real. They could answer no purpose of interest. They lead to suffering and to difficulty. The hardships they produced were a pledge of their sincerity. Were they of a kind which the interest of the parties might suggest, they certainly ought not to be encouraged. Such, however, was the liberality of feeling which actuated that Parliament, that they yielded to scruples which they called pretended; and what then should be their conduct when they believed the scruples to be real? Last year when the Bill was under consideration, there had been but one opinion concerning the character, the submissive conduct, the inoffensive manners of the people for whose relief it was intended. Such had been the opinion which had been formed upon an experience of their good behaviour, and an observation of their principles. When the act of King William was passed, they were a new sect, and their principles were little known, which might give rise to the expression that had been quoted. But notwithstanding this, they did in fact adopt the principle of the present Bill. By making their affirmation evidence, their scruples were indulged in matters of the highest importance. Upon this point, where property is so much concerned, and which on so many occasions affects it so nearly, the legislature did yield to these scruples. His learned friend, likewise, (with no better success to his own argument) had drawn another objection to the measure from this statute of King William, and in asking which to be read, he only had done what he himself had intended to move. He had said that this act was not intended for the benefit of the Quakers, but is stated to be for the more easy recovery

very

very of tythes, and was meant for the advantage of the claimant. This, in fact, was the very object of the present Bill, and his learned friend in his zeal against the measure, had confirmed the argument he maintained, that it would be more beneficial to the tythe-holder than the system that is at present followed. In what view, then, the act of King William might be considered, whether, of relief to the Quaker or benefit to the proprietor, it created a new jurisdiction, the advantage of which, so far as it went, was proved by a century's experience; and he would ask, if it had ever been known to be attended with any instance of inconvenience? His learned friend had indulged himself in putting several fanciful cases and supposed a great number of pretended scruples. There was one which was designed to raise alarm in the minds of the country gentlemen. It was stated as a possible case, that farmers might, from some pretended scruple, refuse to pay their rent. Even for this, however, the law had already provided precisely the very remedy which the Bill meant to introduce. By this, those who should take such a scruple into their heads, and refuse to pay their rent, would be treated just like those who refuse to pay their rent without any scruple. The summary remedy, by distress, the law already afforded. The country gentlemen, therefore, need not be alarmed that their tenants should take such whimsies in their heads, when they were sure that they would soon have a warrant of distress at their backs, which would compel payment.—His learned friend had been particularly unfortunate in this supposition, as it led so directly to the consideration of the remedy, which, in that case, as well as in the present, is the best and most convenient, and by which the claim is made effectual with least litigation and expence. Pamphlets, containing absurd and ridiculous doctrines, had likewise been mentioned, in order to favour the idea of danger. These, however, he was sure were not the grave considerations by which his learned friend was actuated. His learned friend had said, how was it possible to distinguish between the pretended and the real scruples? He would answer, by enquiry, whether the scruples were favourable or hostile to the interest of the parties, and if his learned Friend could shew that interest supported the scruple, he would prove more for his argument than he had hitherto done. It was stated that the Quaker had an interest in the scruples he professed. He could not conceive, however, what interest could prompt a
man

man to profess scruples which, if maintained, led to imprisonment for life, or to stand a suit for a few shillings, which would raise the expence to thirty times the original demand.

This surely was the oddest kind of interest ever heard of. There was no advantage gained by delay, on the contrary, it was attended with additional trouble and expence. While such was the case, he would leave it to his learned Friend to explain the inconsistency, and to reconcile the interest with the scruple. It was said too, that the same indulgence must be granted to all who shall take it into their heads to entertain the same scruples. To this he would answer, yes; when the cases occurred, if the scruples were real, and if they were contrary to the interest of the parties. With respect to the opinion they were to form of the wisdom of the law, which had been made in compliance with them, it was immaterial whether the scruples were real or pretended. The principle had been sanctioned by the legislature. He had heard it whispered that the York case was an instance of the inconvenience of the jurisdiction created by this Bill. With this case, however, he was acquainted, and the inconvenience was occasioned by a departure from the jurisdiction. He did not arraign the conduct of individuals in the hardships which had arisen, for then he should have acted differently; he was convinced that the grievances arose from the law, and that a legislative remedy was required. When he first heard of the York case he had looked into it with attention, and upon it he had formed his judgment, that an extension of the jurisdiction created by the act of King William was required. He had seen with pleasure that no innovation was necessary, that no new principles would be introduced into the system of our laws and constitution. The sum of 10*l.* to which the jurisdiction was originally confined, was not a small sum in tythes; the remedy would be complete by extending the principle already laid down. His learned friend had stated, that discovery was the only case when the jurisdiction might be changed, for when a question of titles arose, the parties were at liberty to apply to the other courts; when this happened, the Quaker then gave up the benefit of the jurisdiction of the justices. Notwithstanding what had been said by his learned friend, he still was of opinion that the measure would be for the benefit of the holder. It was in fact balancing property against personal liberty. The tythe-holder would be enabled to recover his claim, instead of merely obtaining the imprisonment of the Quaker for life. His learned

ed

ed friend had said a great deal to prove that tythes were property, and in this he perfectly agreed with him. The object of the measure was to enable the tythe-holder to recover his claim without the necessity of a suit. His learned friend seemed to state it as if the Bill was to give the holder a law-suit instead of his demand; what, however, is the case at present? If the Quaker is either conscientious or obstinate, an expensive and tedious suit is the consequence, which under the present Bill would be avoided. No suit at all would be necessary; the demand would be recovered in a mode similar to distress. In reality, he was surprised at the objections urged by his learned friend. They seemed as if intended as a contrast to its regulations, and proved the excellency of the principle of the Bill, which went to remedy those very evils which his learned friend had stated as objections. Was it no benefit to the holder, that a great deal of time and expence were saved in the recovery of his claim? Was it no advantage that he got his property instead of the person? Was it no benefit to the Quaker that he escaped the calamity of imprisonment for life, which might now be his fate? Instead of the bodies of seven obstinate or conscientious men, the tythe-holder would be able, in two days, by a summary and cheap mode of proceeding, to recover his money. Whatever prejudice and alarm might at present exist among the clergy with regard to the effect of this Bill, he was convinced it would be overcome by the House, and that after a fair experiment of its operation for a limited time, the clergy themselves would join with the Quakers in their wishes for its renewal. His learned friend asked, if the Quakers petitioned for the relief contained in this Bill?—To this he answered, They did not; the Quakers had petitioned for relief as to the imprisonment of their persons. In his situation, as a member of Parliament, he was to consider what was wise and proper to be done, not what was agreeable to the wishes of those who were the objects. The Quakers were not answerable for what the Bill contained; he alone was responsible for that. It was for the House, however, to determine whether they would entertain the Bill and sanction the purposes it was intended to serve. Among the different arguments which his learned friend had suggested in favour of the measure, which he himself might have overlooked, there was one of which he was aware. It was said that the remedy should be prompt and efficacious. This indeed was the very object of the Bill; for at present, if the Quaker was

was obstinate, no court could enable the holder to recover his tythe, while under this Bill the claim might easily be made good. It was said that, at present, those who refused to pay were obliged to do it by the terror of the law. He was surprised that his learned friend should have employed such an argument. In the same manner the torture and every sort of abuse were justified. A degree of terror might be proper, but it was an object of policy to render it proportionate to the offence. Terror too was not the way that ought to be employed to effect obedience, when other means could be obtained. It was better to facilitate the object by the intervention of legislative regulation. This then was the object, to remove that terror which was inconsistent with humanity, and to prevent offences (if they were to be called offences) by removing their necessity.

It was much better to enable the holder to take the tythes that were before him, than to frighten the Quaker into a payment which his scruples forbade, and when, if he was obstinate, it might be altogether defeated. The mode of sequestration was objected to by his learned friend, and the inconvenience of the holder being obliged to look for the property of the Quaker at a distance, was also stated; but it was to be observed that tythes differed from every other species of debt, because here the fund for payment was pre-supposed, and it must always be in the power of the holder to make his claim effectual, since property to ten times its amount must always exist. Sequestration too was not to be employed till the warrant of the Justices had been put in force, which, in almost every case, would supersede the necessity of the second process. Indeed, that clause had been put in the Bill by the suggestion of his learned friend, or some other person who took a part in the discussion when it was first introduced, for he himself had not considered it to be requisite, although it was possible that, in some cases, the mode of sequestration might be employed. These, however, were matters rather for the consideration of the Committee, and did not go to the principle of the Bill. With regard to the dangers with which the measure might be attended, he differed most widely from his learned friend. He was sorry to hear that opinions hostile to tythes were abroad, but he did not imagine it was in any great degree. For his own part, he thought the clergy ought to be provided, and well provided for. If any opinions hostile to tythes existed, were they not more likely to be dissipated by the display of mild, cheap, and expeditious modes of levying, than by cruel, tedious, and expensive proceedings? If such dangers actually

VOL. II. 1797. F existed,

existed, it would furnish an argument for going much farther than the present measure proposed. If there were people who had sinister motives in the present application, they would find them defeated in the agreeable and conciliating effects which it was fitted to produce. With regard to the extravagant and dangerous doctrines which had gone abroad in the world, his opinions were known. Sure he was, however, that every provision which tends to make the weight of property less oppressive in the mode of levying, and to render it less felt by those who contribute to it, must tend to banish those opinions that would shake the solidity of its foundations. The object of the Bill was to facilitate the claim of the holder, and to render it less burthenome to the person from whom it is due. With regard to the threat which his learned friend said was held out in case the parties removed from the jurisdiction of the Justices, he was led to think from considerations of expedience, which in his mind had always the highest weight, that the option should be taken away. From experience it had been seen that no inconvenience arose from confining the jurisdiction, with regard to tythes, within the fifty-one parishes of the city of London, to the Magistrates, under the single exception of their refusing to act. In the same manner no inconvenience would probably arise from a similar confined jurisdiction in the present case. At all events, however, it was probable that the tythe-holder would take that mode of recovering his claim which was cheap and easy, instead of that which was tedious and expensive. He would submit to the House then, whether this was a Bill so radically defective in principle as to preclude any farther discussion. For his own part, he thought it was calculated to be equally beneficial to every party interested; and in this opinion, till enlightened by the vote of the House, he should remain.

The *Solicitor General* said, the present measure was founded upon an assumption that certain grievances existed; that formed the first question of consideration. He maintained, that no grievances of the nature complained of existed, because there did not exist those scruples of conscience from which those grievances were supposed to have their origin. He desired the learned and Honourable Gentleman to adduce such proof, as should satisfy the House, that any oppression had been used against the Quakers. For the last twenty years there had been none imprisoned for conscience sake; for the York case, of which the House had heard so much, did not fall within that description. And he would venture to assert, that if a Bill could be framed, such as those would wish who
had

had merely pretended scruples of conscience, and whose real object was the interested view of eluding payment of a just and legal due, it would be such a Bill as now was presented. In fact, it would be holding out an encouragement to men of such principles.

His learned friend had noticed, that tythes were not merely ecclesiastical dues, but a great part was also in the hands of lay-impropriators, and must be considered as civil property. When he saw this sort of property in the hands of Quakers, when he saw them leasing tythes, the impropriators of tythes, and collectors, he must infer, that they had no religious or conscientious scruples upon the subject. Nor could he suppose it, that they held it unlawful to pay tythes, when he saw many respectable men, of that class, themselves, in possession of them, and collecting them from others. The law, as it now stood, was completely adequate for their recovery. Seldom was there application even to a Justice; and, in general, Quakers paid their tythes as other men. The case of those now prisoners in York, of which they had heard, and which the learned Serjeant admitted gave rise to his present Bill, was attended with circumstances peculiar to itself. In that case, when the clergyman demanded his tythes, they set up a *modus*; and this very plea, on their part, was an admission of the right: for what was *modus* but a manner of tything a commutation in lieu of tythes in kind? This custom the Magistrates, of course, could not try; and the clergyman was obliged to try the cause in the Exchequer.

The learned Gentleman then read extracts from the cause. In their answer, he observed, they did not hesitate solemnly to affirm, that there existed an ancient and laudable custom of a *modus*; yet this, that they solemnly affirmed, they had not the least proof to support. In this Bill a great burthen was to be thrown upon the Magistrate; for frequently the *quantum* of the tythe was matter of litigation and dispute.

In Quakers of respectability, whom he had known, he never found any of those rigid scruples; and in all the experience he had had, and he had had much, he never found Quakers concerned merely as Quakers, but frequently joined with and pleading as other defendants. About sixty years ago a similar measure was attempted to be brought forward, and similar grievances were stated. After much discussion it passed that House; and when it went to the other, the Quakers were called upon to prove to that House the existence of these grievances. This they could not do, and the Bill was rejected. Since that time a period of sixty years had elapsed,

with the law as it now stood, without any evil consequence resulting. If it happened that a Quaker subjected himself to perpetual imprisonment, he brought himself into that situation exactly in the same manner as a litigious man who obstinately maintained a suit, and overwhelmed himself with costs. That such consequences should be prevented, if possible, he admitted; and he wished a mode could be devised which might extend to all persons in that situation. From the learned Serjeant's statement, the House might be induced to suppose that he had discovered a mode for the more speedy recovery of tythes. If it were so, why did not the Bill come in that shape, that they might debate it? The principle of this seemed to be, that the person should be exonerated, and the property only liable. But he would ask commercial men, whether they considered rendering secure the person of the debtor in the least improved their security? He conceived that this measure would shake that surety which hitherto existed, and as such he must oppose it. With respect to the other parts of the Bill he was not prepared to give any opinion. He thought, if the affirmation of a Quaker was fit to be admitted, in lieu of his oath, it might as well be the subject of a distinct Bill; but, as it now stood, coupled with the other measures, he should oppose the whole.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* explained.

Mr. *Wigley* said, the principle of the Bill was founded on the statute of William, and it only proposed to extend relief for which that act was inadequate. Therefore he did not see any thing new or improper in the Bill.

Mr. *Richards* thought the Bill unnecessary and inconvenient, because it went to alter the law of the land. How could any question of property be a subject of religious scruple, which could exist only in matters of faith? The same scruples of conscience forbade Quakers to pay taxes; yet they were ordered to pay these by their elders. That man could not have much conscience or honesty, who with-held from another a debt which he knew was by law his due. He did not then think that there existed among them such scruples as had been stated. Only one Quaker had been imprisoned in the course of the last 20 years. The whole of the present question, in fact, amounted to this—that, because certain people affected to disobey the law of the land, it was desired they should, on that account, be treated with greater indulgence.

Mr. *Wilberforce* noticed an inconsistency in the arguments of the Gentlemen who opposed the Bill. They praised the
original

original statute of King William, and yet decried the present Bill which proceeded on the same principle. When the advocates of the Bill suggested the propriety of extending the provisions of the statute, its opponents then talked of the salutary effect to be derived from enforcing provisions of more wholesome severity; so that from their language there was reason to conclude, that if they had lived in the reign of King William, they would have voted against that statute. If in the present instance they thought so highly of the benefit to be reaped from holding out a system of terror, why did they not act in conformity to their own principle? Either they ought to move for the repeal of the provisions of the statute of King William, or they ought to support the present Bill for the purpose of adopting them to their full extent. Mr. Wilberforce then adverted to the illiberal language that had been held with respect to the Quakers, whom he believed to be actuated by scruples sincerely conscientious: they had fully evinced their integrity by their conduct during the period of a hundred years, and had received proofs of the regard and protection of the legislature at the best period of our history.

Mr. *Frazer* reprobated the present Bill, as tending to throw odium on the established church. The Quakers were a body who evinced the utmost obstinacy and inveteracy in opposition to the laws. They never went to law, but had a mode of deciding their own disputes without any application to courts of justice. They were a body of men whom he considered as in no respect entitled to more privileges and immunities than any other class of the community.

Mr. *F. Burton* said, that in a former Parliament he had, from a tenderness which he confessed himself to feel for every conscientious scruple, and from a supposition that those of the Quakers were sincere, supported a bill which had part of the tendency of this. He then thought the Quakers oppressed; he had now reason to believe they were not so; and his opinion was confirmed by the returns from all the ecclesiastical courts, as well as the Remembrancer's office, through which the records upon tythe suits must pass. It appeared from these, that, in the last twenty-two years, only three suits against Quakers, and, since the time of Queen Anne, only seven suits, had gone so far as a hearing, and then generally there was a plea of a *modus*, which would still be brought into the ecclesiastical court, even if the present Bill should pass. The persons imprisoned at York were there for costs; and even these might have been released upon the Insolvent Act, if they had not chosen, perhaps for the purposes of this Bill, and probably

bably with sufficient recompence from their brethren, to remain there under the character of martyrs. Unless tythe-owners were permitted to take their tythes in kind, the half of their value would be lost to them; not that, in point of fact, they would so take them, but that the right to do so would enable them to obtain their amount. Mr. Burton concluded by observing, that he certainly felt compassion for Quakers, or any other persons suffering for conscientious scruples; but he also felt compassion for that highly venerable and useful body of men, the parochial clergy resident upon the smaller livings, whom it would enable Quakers so to harass upon every occasion, that they would probably at length surrender a part of that income intended for the support of their families. He felt also for other owners of tythes, of whom many were widows, infants, or orphans. The Bill would enable Quakers to oppress these; and he knew of no substantial oppression from which Quakers were to be relieved.

The House now divided—

<i>Ayes</i> (for the question)	33
<i>Noes</i> (against it)	— 33

The *Speaker* gave the casting vote in favour of the *Ayes*.

The House therefore went into a Committee, made a short progress, and agreed to go into a further Committee on this Bill on Tuesday morning next.

The House in a Committee on the Bill to enable the East India Company to encrease their stock, &c. passed a Committee of the whole House, and the report was ordered to be received on Monday.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* presented a Petition on behalf of certain individuals who were holders of certain written instruments which had been determined in a court of law they could not recover the money upon, on account of their being on an improper stamp, which circumstance arose from inadvertency, praying relief of the House, &c. which, after a few observations from the Solicitor General, chiefly by way of caution, in case any proposition should be hereafter moved upon it, was brought up, read, and ordered to be laid on the table.

Mr. *David Scott* brought up a Petition from the East India Company, stating that they had always given directions to their servants not to receive rewards, &c. for any appointments to offices, &c. and praying leave to bring in a Bill to empower them to administer certain oaths to certain persons employed in their service, &c. Referred to a Committee.

Mr. *Mainwaring* presented a Petition on behalf of the inhabitants of Covent Garden, Russel Court, and places adjacent, complain-

complaining of a certain burying ground in their neighbourhood as a nuisance, from which is apprehended pestilence.— Referred to a Committee.

BUTCHERS' MEAT.

Mr. *Mainwaring* then gave notice, that on Monday se'n-night he should have a motion to submit to the House on the present high price of Butchers' meat.

The other orders of the day were deferred to Monday.— Adjourned to Monday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *February 27.*

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES.

Lord *Grenville* moved that the order of the day for the Committee of Privileges to sit the next day be discharged; and moved, that the said Committee sit on Thursday. Ordered.

Lord *Grenville* presented a Message from his Majesty, which was handed to the Lord Chancellor, and read as follows.

MESSAGE FROM THE KING.

“GEORGE REX.

“His Majesty thinks it proper to communicate to the House of Lords, without delay, the measure adopted to obviate the effects which might be occasioned by the unusual demand of Specie lately made from different parts of the country on the metropolis.

“The peculiar nature and exigency of the case appeared to require, in the first instance, the measure contained in the Order of Council, which his Majesty has directed to be laid before the House. In recommending this important subject to the immediate and serious attention of the House of Lords, his Majesty relies with the utmost confidence on the experienced wisdom and firmness of his Parliament, for taking such measures as may be best calculated to meet any temporary pressure, and to call forth, in the most effectual manner, the exclusive resources of this kingdom, in support of their public and commercial credit, and in defence of their dearest interests.

G. R.”

Lord *Grenville* also presented the following Order of Council, which was ordered to lie on the table.

COPY OF THE ORDER OF PRIVY COUNCIL.

“At the Council Chamber, Whitehall, February 26th, 1797. By the Lords of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council. Present

The Lord Chancellor,—Lord President,

Duke of Portland,—Marquis Cornwallis,

Earl Spencer,—Earl of Liverpool,

Lord *Grenville*,—Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

“Upon

" Upon the representation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stating that from the result of the information which he has received, and of the enquiries which it has been his duty to make respecting the effect of the unusual demands for Specie that have been made upon the metropolis, in consequence of ill-founded or exaggerated alarms in different parts of the country, it appears that, unless some measure is immediately taken, there may be reason to apprehend a want of a sufficient supply of cash to answer the exigencies of the public service: It is the unanimous opinion of the Board, that it is indispensably necessary for the public service, that the Directors of the Bank of England should forbear issuing any cash in payment until the sense of Parliament can be taken on that subject, and the proper measures adopted thereupon, for maintaining the means of circulation, and supporting the public and commercial credit of the kingdom at this important conjuncture; and it is ordered, that a copy of this minute be transmitted to the Directors of the Bank of England, and they are hereby required, on the grounds of the exigency of the case, to conform thereto until the sense of Parliament can be taken as aforesaid.

(Signed) W. FAWKENER."

Lord *Grenville* said, it was not then his intention to detain their Lordships by a speech, or to enter into a subject of so much importance. He wished to give the noble Lords the same time to consider of it as was usual in such cases, and therefore he moved, that the communication from his Majesty be taken into consideration the next day, and the Lords summoned. Ordered.

The Duke of *Norfolk* desired that the Order of Council be read; and the same being read accordingly, his Grace said, as this message was to be taken into consideration the next day, he should not then go much into the subject. There were, however, some circumstances that induced him to call the attention of the House to the words of the message; the cause in which it was originated must give a very serious alarm to their Lordships, and to the country. He was no friend to alarms, and thought that this was one of the most dangerous kind that had yet been circulated. The Bank were ordered to refuse payment of their own bills, in the possession of individuals who had considered them as property. He thought that the desperate exigency to which Ministers had driven the country (for to their conduct he certainly must ascribe it), was owing to the exportation of specie; an important fact, which claimed the immediate attention of Parliament, and he believed was the effect of a system pursued by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom he understood to be the mover, contriver, and organizer of all those measures which had so much disgraced the country, and was driving it to ruin. He said, one great cause of the evil complained of in that Order of Council had been

been totally omitted; and therefore he wished to state it to their Lordships. The great scarcity of gold and silver, which was at present experienced in this kingdom, arose in a very great degree from the vast exportation of it, both in coin and bullion, to the Emperor of Germany, and our other allies upon the continent; and therefore the evil now complained of would be greatly remedied if no more were to be exported.— For that purpose his Grace moved,

“ That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that no farther exportation of gold or silver coin, or of gold or silver bullion, should take place for the use of the Emperor or any other foreign power, until the sense of Parliament be taken on that subject, after a full review of the causes of the present exigencies of the public, and on which his Majesty has been advised to issue the extraordinary and illegal Proclamation upon the table.”

Several Lords here called out, it was no *Proclamation*; upon which his Grace substituted in the place of it, *Order of Council*.

The *Lord Chancellor* read the motion; after which

Lord Grenville said, as their Lordships had determined not to take the subject into consideration till the next day, he did not chuse to discuss it, even though the noble Duke seemed to wish to decide that day what was to be discussed the next. He had no wish to avoid the discussion when it came regularly before the House; but he thought it neither necessary, nor consistent with the dignity of the House, to decide that immediately, as the noble Duke's motion went to do by a side-wind, which they had agreed should be the subject of discussion the next day; neither he nor the House were prepared for it.

The Duke of *Norfolk* explained, and said, his motion was collateral to the business that stood for the next day, and nothing prevented their Lordships' from deciding upon it that day.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, he certainly did not rise with any intention to enter into the business that was already determined for discussion the next day, but he rose to support his noble friend's motion, considering that as a subject, which, though connected with the main topic of his Majesty's Message, was of so temporary a nature, as to require immediate consideration; and whatever way his noble friend's motion was disposed of, it could not, in his conception, affect the other part of the discussion in the smallest degree. His Lordship said, that, considering the glaring incapacity and ill conduct of his Majesty's Ministers in the course of the war, he could easily imagine, that their ruinous measures might have brought the country into such a situation, as to render some

strong measure, for the support of public credit, unavoidably necessary ; but, hopeless as his expectations had been as to the event and consequences of the war, he had not conceived it possible that they, who not only ought to have seen their danger, but who, in fact, must have been aware of it, should have suffered themselves to be taken by surprize, and driven as it were to the necessity, almost momentarily, of taking a step so alarming, and so fatal, as to order, or rather to require (for that he saw was the word in the Order of Council) of the Bank to stop payment of their own notes, and refuse to give cash for them to the holders, whose property that cash most undeniably was. It was the more extraordinary, that the impulse, which occasioned this violent measure, should have come upon them so much on the sudden, as to have occasioned them to meet on the preceding day, and take, all at once, a step of so extraordinary a nature, without consulting Parliament. Did his Majesty's Ministers really know nothing of their intentions in this respect before ? Parliament had been sitting during the whole of the last fortnight, and not one word had been dropt by Ministers on the subject. If they meant so very soon to have taken a step of so much importance, why could they not have submitted it to Parliament, which was sitting, on Friday ; or why had not Parliament sat on Saturday, or even on Sunday, if it had been thought necessary ?—At any rate, Parliament ought to have been consulted on an occasion of such moment. Not being aware of the grounds and reasons which prompted Ministers on the sudden to adopt so extraordinary a measure, he could not possibly argue upon its expediency, or its necessity ; but for his Majesty's Ministers to have taken the measure under such circumstances, gave room for suspicion, and rendered his noble friend's motion highly proper. He should therefore vote with the noble Duke, if he took the sense of the House upon it.

Lord *Romney* said, that in the present awful and momentous situation of the country, he thought it of the utmost importance that nothing like a suspicion should go abroad that a charge had been made, or even an insinuation thrown out, on the conduct of Ministers, as far as it was connected with the important subject of his Majesty's Message. In the present stage of the business, such an insinuation must have a dangerous effect without doors, and must at any rate be premature, previous to the subject's coming fully under the consideration of Parliament. The words " extraordinary and illegal," which were in his noble friend's motion, if not a direct charge on his Majesty's Ministers, certainly amounted to a pretty strong

strong insinuation, that the step necessary to be taken, was occasioned by the misconduct of Ministers. If he thought any part of the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers unconstitutional, he trusted there was not a Peer in that House, nor a man in the kingdom, who would be more eager than himself to come forward and reprobate it in the strongest terms. On the present occasion whatever might be said on those topics at a future day, he had hoped that the injustice or ill conduct of the war would not have been alluded to, because such reflections stated in a moment, when the subject sufficiently serious in itself, by no means called for them, might do infinite mischief without doors, and make an impression on the publick mind, that had much better be avoided. His Lordship said, that as he understood from authority, that he could rely on, that the sense of the House would be taken on the present motion, he was desirous that the grounds of his vote that day, should be known.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, if the omission of the words "extraordinary and illegal," were so offensive as to prevent the words being agreed to, he had no doubt but the noble Duke would readily strike them out, but that the necessity of complying with the essential part of the motion he held to be indispensable, as no reason whatever could be assigned for withholding the exportation of bullion and specie to foreign powers under the present circumstances.

The Duke of *Grafton* earnestly entreated Ministers to consider for a moment, what inference would be drawn without doors by the public at large, from their refusing, if not to accede to the motion, at least to give the House some assurance, that it was not their intention to send any more specie out of the kingdom before Parliament had decided on the very extraordinary measures that had been taken. He really thought it was the duty of the Noble Secretary of State to say explicitly upon what ground the present measure had been adopted, whether Ministers meant to build it on any high toned prerogative of the Crown, which did not in fact exist in this country, and which he hoped there was still jealousy enough to watch. He approved of the words "extraordinary and illegal," because he was convinced they were strictly applicable, and words which ought to command the attention of the House. Whether the motion, however, was acceded to or not, he anxiously wished that the noble Secretary of State would condescend to give the House some assurance, that after finding it necessary to come to

so extraordinary a measure, it was not the intention of Ministers to send more bullion or specie to Germany for the present.

Lord *Grenville* said, that after the House had agreed to postpone the consideration of the whole of this subject till the next day, the noble Duke had no right to call upon him for explanation; but as he was anxious and desirous to give the noble Duke every satisfaction, he had no objection to answer his question. His Lordship said, the Bank were not obliged to obey the Order of Council, though he hoped to make it appear, that they acted wisely for themselves, as well as the public, in obeying it. It was competent to the Bank to act as they pleased. They were perfectly free, and the Order of Council was not compulsory on them. They might, if they pleased, have refused to obey it. With regard to any sums of money that had been sent out of the kingdom, he should ever be ready to argue that the transmitting money to our Allies to support and encourage them in their endeavours to annoy and weaken the enemy, was money wisely and well disposed, and sure he was that the having pursued that practice had been attended with beneficial and salutary consequences to the country. With regard to the present motion, he should certainly vote against it, for this single reason, that it tended to convey an insinuation against Ministers, which they did not deserve, and to decide by a side-wind on one part of a very important subject, before the whole of it was taken into consideration, and therefore it was not a fair and candid proceeding in itself, or fit to be adopted by a House of Parliament.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, that neither the noble Duke, nor he, meant to say any thing at present as to the sums that had been transmitted already to the Emperor, but after the Order of Council, in which the Board expressly required the Bank to stop payment, it must be impossible to justify the sending any more specie out of the kingdom, at the time that it was withheld from those who had an undoubted right to claim their own property from the Bank, to whom they had entrusted it.

The Duke of *Norfolk* rose to notice what had been said in objection to the words, "extraordinary and illegal," which made a part of his motion, and which he thought himself perfectly warranted in applying to the order of Council. Had he apprehended that the omission of those words would have induced the House to adopt the motion, they

they should not have had a place in it, but conceiving, that if he were to omit them, it would not cause his motion to meet with a more favourable reception, he must take the sense of the House on the whole of his motion, as it stood.

That the Order of Council was extraordinary, the Duke said, he was satisfied, that no noble Lord, no man in the country could deny. It seemed to be equally clear, that it was illegal; since it required the Bank not to pay money to those individuals who presented their notes, and upon the faith of which payment alone their notes had obtained a circulation.—It had been said the order of the Privy Council was not binding upon the Bank. His Grace did not know what he ought to call the Privy Council, whether a court of Justice, or what was the nature and extent of its jurisdiction. It was, however, an high constituted authority, recognized by the constitution of this country, and therefore all its orders must produce a great effect on those to whom they were directed. He wished to ask the noble Lord one question: Was it intended to send any more money to the Emperor of Germany?

The Duke of *Grafton* said, if the Noble Lord would have the goodness to answer that question, it would remove all difficulty: and an assurance that there was no such intention would be most satisfactory to the country. It would also be unnecessary to press his noble friend's motion to a division.

Lord *Grenville* replied, that he would not discuss that day a subject which the House had determined to take into consideration the next; and the only motive for pressing that motion was, as he observed before, to endeavour by a side-wind to decide a part of the question.

The Earl of *Moir* declared he rose to say only one word. Considering the importance of the subject, and the nature of the question put by the noble Duke, he really thought an answer ought to have been given by the noble Secretary of State. He was aware that in so short a space as four and twenty hours little mischief was likely to take place, or could make any difference, but he was afraid, that in consequence of the refusal of Ministers to answer on this subject, a suspicion might go abroad that Ministers did mean directly, to send specie out of the kingdom, when they had taken a measure which would effectually operate to its being withheld from its rightful owner, and therefore free as his mind was from any such suspicion, and believing as he did, that
the

the more the affairs of the Bank were enquired into, the more substantial their affluence would be found, and their conduct the more honourable to the Governor and Directors, he must vote with the Noble Duke.

The question being put, the House divided.

<i>Contents</i>	—	—	—	5
<i>Not Contents</i>	—	—		34
<i>Majority</i>				29

LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

The Earl of *Moir* reminded their Lordships that previous to the recess, he had given notice of his intention of bringing forward a subject, on which he had too often troubled the House, but which he could not abandon; viz. a revision and reform of the laws between debtor and creditor. He begged it to be understood that he did not mean a temporary insolvent Bill, that he deemed a fraud on the public and a great evil. What he aimed at, was to expunge from the law books what he considered as a disgrace to their pages, or rather to put on them an improved system of legal regulations, which should equally tend to protect the creditor and relieve the honest but unfortunate debtor. Hitherto he had waited for the attendance of a noble and learned law-Lord, but finding that attendance not practicable, he was determined to bring on the subject in the course of the ensuing week. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *February 27.*

LANDING OF THE FRENCH IN WALES.

A new *Member*, desired the House to excuse his alarm upon the recent landing of fourteen hundred of the enemy in Wales, and wished the country to come forward with some extraordinary measures in consequence; because he conceived it to be the intention of the enemy to load this country with prisoners of war, else it was impossible to conceive why such a number of men should have been landed, as he understood, without arms or ammunition, and surrender themselves as they had done. He wished to direct the attention of the House to some enquiry upon this subject, but was ignorant of the manner of proceeding, as he did not know whether he ought to make any kind of motion, or not, to gain the information which he wanted.

The

The *Speaker* informed him, that the only mode of obtaining any kind of specific information was by making a specific motion for the purpose.

The honourable *Member* asked the *Speaker* how he was to do it?

The *Speaker* replied, that, as he did not understand the nature of the information he desired, it was impossible for him to point out the manner of the motion, otherwise than by repeating what he had before stated, that the motion must specify the object of the information wanted.

The honourable *Member* then moved, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, to acquaint the House, how the enemy happened to land in Pembroke-shire, what their intentions were in coming thither, and what was to be done?"

The *Speaker* paused, before he presumed to put the question, for somebody to second it.

The honourable *Member* asked the *Speaker* why he did not put the question?

The *Speaker* informed him, that it was irregular, until seconded by some other Member.

The honourable *Member* then applied to the House for somebody to second it, and accidentally glancing at Mr. Plumer in his survey, asked whether the Member for Hertfordshire would not?

Mr. *Plumer*, however, thought proper to disregard it, and the Member and his motion remained in *statu quo*.

CANTERBURY ELECTION.

Mr. *Vansittart* reported that Thomas Jones, Esq. was indisposed by ill health, and could not attend the Committee for trying the merits of the Canterbury election, and that Dr. Blane, his physician, was ready to appear at the bar of the House, to give evidence of the same.

Dr. *Blane* was then called in and sworn. In answer to the interrogations of the *Speaker*, he stated, that he had seen Mr. Jones that morning; that his complaint was a pain in the chest; that he was thereby rendered incapable of attending the Committee, inasmuch as it would be both imprudent and dangerous for him to go out: and that some days might elapse before he would be able to return to his former avocations.

Dr. Blane withdrew, and Mr. Jones was excused his further attendance on the said Committee.

STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

Colonel Wood said, that in the present state of alarm and public embarrassment he by no means wished to increase the difficulties which Ministers must necessarily have to encounter. He believed that they would do him the justice to allow that, for the last six months, he had exerted himself to the utmost of his power to preserve the peace and tranquillity of the country, but when its safety was endangered, and its dearest interests were at stake, he found himself impelled by his duty as a member of Parliament, to come forward and suggest such measures as might tend to promote its interests. That an alarm at present existed no one could doubt who was at all acquainted with the state of the public mind. It was of importance then to enquire in what this alarm originated. He confessed it was his opinion that it proceeded from want of confidence in the measures of Ministers. It could not be alleged that it arose from any great national misfortune, nor were the people of England so defective in courage as to dread the consequence of any invasion which might be attempted against them by the French. He was confident, for his own part, and he was sure that it was the general sentiment, that if ever such an attempt was made, and if the resources of this country were fairly called into action, that it would terminate in ruin and disgrace to the invaders. But if Ministers neglected to adopt even common precautions, it was not to be wondered at that the people should be afraid. He had resolved, therefore, if no other person more accustomed to public speaking than he was, took the lead in the business, that he should bring it forward the first open day, by moving an enquiry into the measures which Government had taken for the defence of the country. From all that he could learn, he understood that, so far from there being a proper store of arms in the kingdom, that there was barely sufficient for arming the troops at present embodied. In his opinion it would require all the gunsmiths and locksmiths in the kingdom two years to prepare a sufficient quantity of arms for the national defence. At such a period as this, therefore, Government ought to have imported arms from abroad, whereas he was informed that the orders which had been given to some manufacturers were countermanded, and that others of them had refused to execute the orders which they had received, because they were not paid their former accounts. He hoped that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not
let

let even this opportunity pass of giving the House some satisfaction upon a subject which was of the last importance to the country, now that it was engaged in obstinate struggles with a daring, formidable, and rapacious enemy.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he did not feel himself called upon to say much on the present occasion, because there was no motion before the House upon which he could regularly speak; and the more so as the speech of the honourable gentleman had not amounted even to a specific notice. He had represented that he had been prompted to the observations he had just made by the present state of the country, as it respected its internal defence. It did, however, so happen, that the motion of an honourable gentleman which stood for this evening naturally led to a full discussion of that important subject; a discussion in which the country was certainly deeply interested, and to which no one was more anxious to enter than his honourable friends and himself. It did so happen also, that, had the honourable gentleman waited till the usual time at which public business commenced, he would have seen that he was just about to deliver a message which he had the honour to bring down from his Majesty, containing a gracious communication respecting the present state of public affairs. He hoped, therefore, that the House would excuse him, if at the present moment he declined entering into any explanation of the topics to which the honourable gentleman had alluded; an explanation which would be as unnecessary in substance as irregular in form.

HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then repaired to the bar, and brought up a Message from the King, essentially the same with that presented the same day to the House of Lords.

The Message being read,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was his intention at present to say little more than merely move that his Majesty's Message be taken into consideration the next day. He took that opportunity however, of giving notice, that in addition to the Address which he meant to move, he should propose that a select committee be appointed to enquire into the outstanding engagements of the Bank, and of the means they had of making good their engagements. When he gave notice of such a proposition rendered proper by the particular circumstances of the moment, he had no difficulty in declaring it to be his firm opinion, that not the smallest suspicion could justly be entertained of the solidity of the Bank; on the

contrary, he believed that its resources never were more abundant. Another proposition which he meant to submit to the deliberation of Parliament, and which in the present circumstances he had no doubt would be found to be highly expedient, was to declare by law, that the engagements of the Bank at present outstanding, or which may hereafter be contracted to a certain amount, are secured by the public, and that notes, instead of cash, will be taken by the public in payment of sums due to them by the Bank. This was a measure which he thought himself warranted to propose at such a conjuncture as the present, and he had no doubt that it would tend very much to confirm the solidity of the Bank capital, an object, the national importance of which could not be disputed. He should not, he said, expatiate further upon the subject at present, having given notice of the propositions which he intended to make. In the interval, between that and the next day, Gentlemen would have an opportunity of weighing the important topics that would then come under discussion. He was convinced that when the circumstances of the times were duly considered, that the House would join with him in opinion that the Bank ought to be restrained from making any payments in cash, except in certain cases, and so sanguine was he of the advantages which would follow from this restriction, that he could not let the subject pass, even on that day, without giving notice of his intentions formally to submit it to the House. He concluded with moving, "that his Majesty's Message be ordered to be taken into consideration the next day."

Mr. Fox said, that although what had been just delivered by the right hon. Gentleman should be considered strictly as a notice only of what he intended to bring forward the next day, yet at this eventful moment he thought it necessary to say a few words. What might, or might not be advisable to be done upon the matter he alluded to, he should then give no opinion upon. But with respect to the duty of every Member of that House, and every man in the country, to turn in his mind the subject, to employ the whole activity of his intellect upon it, and to form as good an opinion as he was able respecting it, and that without the delay of a single hour, he thought that to give that sort of warning was his duty. On what the right hon. Gentleman said he meant to move the next day, he thought his duty to say a word or two. The right hon. Gentleman said he should move for a Committee of Enquiry into the circumstances of the Bank. To
a motion

a motion for such an enquiry, even if moved that day, he should have no objection; it might be useful, as far as it went. But he owned he saw the propriety of that House making an enquiry to a much greater extent. They should enquire not only into the circumstances of the Bank, but also into the circumstances which had led to the present embarrassment. The right honourable Gentleman had stated some things relative to the prosperous state of the Bank, which he would dare to say were warranted, and which he hoped would be made manifest in the result of the enquiry. They should not, however, stop there; they ought to enquire into all the causes of this necessity, they should be possessed of all the measures that led to this most extraordinary, most novel, and wholly unprecedented scheme to aid our finance, a scheme which no man could think of without shuddering.

With regard to the provisions which the right honourable Gentleman pointed out, he had no difficulty in stating the view he had of the matter. With regard therefore to what the Minister had stated of the propriety of aiding the security of Bank notes, of pledging the faith of Government to them, there appeared to him nothing objectionable in such a proposition. If the Minister thought that Bank notes should be made legal tenders for public purposes, there might be but little, if any, difficulty in assenting to his proposition. But these were very general words, capable of being differently understood by different persons. If the Minister meant to make Bank notes legal payment from individuals to the public, that was a point liable of course to discussion, but against which he did not see the same objection as if he took the question in another view, for it would be only matter of policy to a limited extent. But if he meant to make Bank notes legal payment from the public to the individual, if such a measure, he said, should become necessary, it was a measure which the House could not think of without seeing that it must shake the very foundation of public credit.

What led him to this observation, was part of the Minister's speech that night, and something which he saw in papers which were before the House. In the Minister's statement of the matter, he set forth the difficulties of the Bank to answer, by payment in cash, for their outstanding engagements. The means of answering these engagements in that way formed the difficulty of the Bank. He had no difficulty in assenting to what the Minister stated upon that subject, as far as payment was to be made to Government; but when he came to reflect upon an order in Council, and on the obedience which he saw

the Bank disposed to pay to that order, the subject became alarming. He did not say that the conduct of the Bank brought on the necessity, but the thing itself appeared to be to him alarming, for the Bank say they will pay Government in Bank notes, and that warrants on dividends shall be paid in like manner. The warrants on dividends were the interest on the national debt. He was not then going to anticipate the measure which Parliament should adopt upon this subject, nor to discuss it at length; but Parliament having passed an act, binding the Bank to pay the warrants on dividends not in Bank notes, but in money; this, therefore, was a very alarming proposition, and worthy at least the serious attention of the House. These observations, he knew, did not apply to Bank stock, but they applied to the payment of dividends on other stock. He did not now press for any explanation upon this topic, but he felt the importance of it to a great degree, for the proposition was certainly novel, unprecedented, and such as the House should not form an opinion upon hastily.

Having said this, he had only to add, that he should endeavour to inform himself as well as he could on the subject, and bear the whole of it in his mind, and he advised every man in that House, and every thinking man in the country, to do the same. It appeared to him to be of extreme importance, of extreme danger, and might lead to the most dreadful ill consequences to every individual in this country; nay, it might put an end altogether to its existence as a powerful nation. The House would do nothing useful on the subject, if it did not institute an enquiry into the whole of the circumstances that have led us to this dreadful situation.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* wished to be informed, whether it was the intention of the honourable Gentleman that Bank notes should be taken only by the receivers of the revenue, or that they were to become a legal tender in all money transactions.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had given no opinion of the choice and propriety of the measures to be adopted, but left that subject for future deliberation. It might be advisable to make Bank notes receivable from individuals on the part of the public, and that practice had hitherto prevailed almost universally. But he begged to be understood not to express an opinion of his own upon it. All that he had hitherto stated was, that he thought it prudent and expedient to appoint a Select Committee as soon as possible, to enquire into the amount of the present number of notes issued by the Bank, and to enquire into the policy of issuing such a further amount as may relieve

relieve the public credit. This appointment, however, for prudent considerations, he thought proper to defer till the next day, because, however adviseable it might be to enter into the discussion of so important and urgent a question, he thought the remedy might be rendered more effectual by a short and cautious delay, and that ultimately the business would be accelerated by it. He was of opinion with the honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox), that reflection, during the interval, was necessary on a subject so extremely momentous, in order to attain a sufficient degree of information. A further delay, however, was incompatible with the urgency of it.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* asked, whether it was his opinion that this remedy would be resorted to in the end?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had no opinion upon the subject.

Mr. *Fox* asked, if he disclaimed the opinion?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that he said nothing about it at all.

His Majesty's Message was then ordered to be taken into consideration the next day.

The Order in Council was ordered to be taken into consideration at the same time.

On the motion of Mr. *R. Thornton*, the ballot on the Petition against the Colchester election was deferred till the 2d of March.

REMITTANCE TO THE EMPEROR.

Mr. *Sheridan* rose, not to pursue the observations which had been made upon the present critical state of the country, but to express his surprise that the consideration of the Order in Council should be put off for a single day. In the first part of the order he found nothing but an opinion respecting the circumstances of the Bank, as connected with the present state of public affairs; the conclusion of it contained nothing less than a positive requisition of all the cash in the Bank; a requisition which, however strange and unconstitutional, the Bank Directors thought themselves bound in duty to obey. This order certainly was of such a nature that the House had a right to expect some explanation upon the subject. He understood the right honourable Gentleman, that this order had already produced the happiest effects. If he meant that stocks had risen since, he differed in his opinion from the right honourable Gentleman upon that subject, because he considered the rise of stock at a time when the Bank had actually stopped payment as so preposterous and unnatural, that it was rather alarming than consolatory. The conduct of the Minister,
however,

however, had suggested to him a motion, upon which he should certainly take the sense of the House, and upon which they ought not to delay a single hour in expressing an opinion. He should endeavour to abstain from expressing those sentiments of indignation which every man must feel that evening. He could not, however, but remark, that the right honourable Gentleman was now acting upon the same system of delusion which had characterised all his administration. He entertained no doubts about the solidity of the Bank, nor did he object to the public pledging their security for the outstanding engagements of the Bank, but he remonstrated strongly against the mode in which the business was brought before the legislature. What right had Government to exercise a compulsory power over the Bank of England? The fair way would have been for the Bank to have laid a statement of their situation before the House, to have described the causes to which their embarrassments were to be imputed, and to have prayed for that interference in their behalf, which he was sure the legislature, upon proper grounds, would have been ready to grant. Instead of this, an Order in Council had been issued, putting the whole cash of the Bank in requisition. And upon what pretence? To satisfy the necessary demands of the public service! What right had Government to the cash of the Bank more than to the cash of any individual in the kingdom? As well, and with full as much justice, might the honourable Gentleman have put in requisition the money of those wealthy placemen and pensioners who were planted around him. Nay, this would not have been so bad, for, in the present instance, by an act of compulsion upon the Bank, he was obliging it to break faith with its creditors. And what were these public exigencies on account of which this strange and unprecedented measure was adopted? They must necessarily be such as the public paper securities could not satisfy.

With respect to the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the affairs of the Bank. It was notorious that a leak had sprung in the vessel, and it was pretty evident that it had been occasioned by the exportation of specie into foreign countries; as to the criminality of the pilot, that would be matter for future consideration. Taking that for granted, therefore, of which every one was perfectly convinced, that the immense exportation of specie was the cause of the present embarrassments, he should move,

“ That it is the opinion of this House, that no further exportation of specie or gold should take place for the use of the Emperor, or any other foreign power, until the sense of Parliament

liament shall have been taken on the subject, upon a full review of the causes of the present exigencies of the public."

It might be said, that in a season of so great difficulty, it was not probable that the Ministers of the country would take a step which would add so much to their pressure. With regard to his professions, he had seen him so often abandon them, that he no longer reposed any trust either in his representations or his promises. He now placed as little confidence in his discretion. After his boasting a few months ago of the high state of public credit; after vaunting his address in filching so much money from the country without its being publicly known, and after bringing down the communication of that day, what confidence could he (Mr. Sheridan) place in his discretion? It was not enough for the House to leave him to be guided by the dictates of his prudence, for prudence they found, by dire experience, that he did not possess; nor was it their duty to be satisfied with his professions; they had witnessed his promises to be no sooner made than broken; they ought to say not only that he ought not, but that he dared not to do it. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) might plead that the faith of the country was pledged to the Emperor; but was not the faith of the Bank also pledged to its creditors? If the honourable Gentleman urged, that the withholding supplies from the Emperor would occasion great inconveniencies in carrying on the war, he would grant that this might be true; but of two evils they were to choose the least; and then he would ask, if there was any man who thought that, were we to go on furnishing money to the Imperial army, that this country would find any compensation in their possible, or even probable successes, for the certain evils which it would thereby sustain? He concluded with repeating his determination to take the sense of the House upon his motion, and with expressing his opinion, that, if it was negatived, the country would one day consider them as the accomplices of the Ministers in promoting its destruction.

Mr. *Nichol* said, with some warmth, he thought that the motion ought to be immediately adopted, and rose to second it. He pressed the Chancellor of the Exchequer for an answer to the question which had been put to him, whether it was his intention that the notes of the Bank of England should be declared a legal tender from the Bank to the public creditor? If so, he was about to proclaim an act of insolvency! And, considering it in this light, he reprobated his silence as an instance of the most atrocious arrogance. After animadverting in the severest terms on the confiding majorities in that House,

who

however, had suggested to him a motion, upon which he should certainly take the sense of the House, and upon which they ought not to delay a single hour in expressing an opinion. He should endeavour to abstain from expressing those sentiments of indignation which every man must feel that evening. He could not, however, but remark, that the right honourable Gentleman was now acting upon the same system of delusion which had characterised all his administration. He entertained no doubts about the solidity of the Bank, nor did he object to the public pledging their security for the outstanding engagements of the Bank, but he remonstrated strongly against the mode in which the business was brought before the legislature. What right had Government to exercise a compulsory power over the Bank of England? The fair way would have been for the Bank to have laid a statement of their situation before the House, to have described the causes to which their embarrassments were to be imputed, and to have prayed for that interference in their behalf, which he was sure the legislature, upon proper grounds, would have been ready to grant. Instead of this, an Order in Council had been issued, putting the whole cash of the Bank in requisition. And upon what pretence? To satisfy the necessary demands of the public service! What right had Government to the cash of the Bank more than to the cash of any individual in the kingdom? As well, and with full as much justice, might the honourable Gentleman have put in requisition the money of those wealthy placemen and pensioners who were planted around him. Nay, this would not have been so bad, for, in the present instance, by an act of compulsion upon the Bank, he was obliging it to break faith with its creditors. And what were these public exigencies on account of which this strange and unprecedented measure was adopted? They must necessarily be such as the public paper securities could not satisfy.

With respect to the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the affairs of the Bank. It was notorious that a leak had sprung in the vessel, and it was pretty evident that it had been occasioned by the exportation of specie into foreign countries; as to the criminality of the pilot, that would be matter for future consideration. Taking that for granted, therefore, of which every one was perfectly convinced, that the immense exportation of specie was the cause of the present embarrassments, he should move,

“ That it is the opinion of this House, that no further exportation of specie or gold should take place for the use of the Emperor, or any other foreign power, until the sense of Parliament

liament shall have been taken on the subject, upon a full review of the causes of the present exigencies of the public."

It might be said, that in a season of so great difficulty, it was not probable that the Ministers of the country would take a step which would add so much to their pressure. With regard to his professions, he had seen him so often abandon them, that he no longer reposed any trust either in his representations or his promises. He now placed as little confidence in his discretion. After his boasting a few months ago of the high state of public credit; after vaunting his address in filching so much money from the country without its being publicly known, and after bringing down the communication of that day, what confidence could he (Mr. Sheridan) place in his discretion? It was not enough for the House to leave him to be guided by the dictates of his prudence, for prudence they found, by dire experience, that he did not possess; nor was it their duty to be satisfied with his professions; they had witnessed his promises to be no sooner made than broken; they ought to say not only that he ought not, but that he dared not to do it. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) might plead that the faith of the country was pledged to the Emperor; but was not the faith of the Bank also pledged to its creditors? If the honourable Gentleman urged, that the withholding supplies from the Emperor would occasion great inconveniencies in carrying on the war, he would grant that this might be true; but of two evils they were to choose the least; and then he would ask, if there was any man who thought that, were we to go on furnishing money to the Imperial army, that this country would find any compensation in their possible, or even probable successes, for the certain evils which it would thereby sustain? He concluded with repeating his determination to take the sense of the House upon his motion, and with expressing his opinion, that, if it was negatived, the country would one day consider them as the accomplices of the Ministers in promoting its destruction.

Mr. *Nichol* said, with some warmth, he thought that the motion ought to be immediately adopted, and rose to second it. He pressed the Chancellor of the Exchequer for an answer to the question which had been put to him, whether it was his intention that the notes of the Bank of England should be declared a legal tender from the Bank to the public creditor? If so, he was about to proclaim an act of insolvency! And, considering it in this light, he reprobated his silence as an instance of the most atrocious arrogance. After animadverting in the severest terms on the confiding majorities in that House,

who

who supported the Minister in every measure, however wild, and sanctioned every part of his conduct, however insolent, he concluded with repeating the question, whether or not Bank notes were to be declared a legal tender to the public creditor?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he was much surprised at the speech and the motion of Mr. Sheridan, but he was much more perplexed by the observations and questions of the learned Gentleman who seconded the motion, who, to an intricacy which it was impossible to unravel, added an exertion of voice much beyond what he was accustomed to, and an asperision of language which even exceeded that of the honourable mover. He hoped that he would not persist in thinking it atrocious arrogance in him if he did not attempt to answer what he conceived it would be unpardonable arrogance in him to attempt to understand. When a man obtruded his opinion with too much rashness, or too much positiveness, then he might be accused of arrogance; but he did not perceive that a man, who altogether declined giving an opinion, could incur the imputation.

The learned Gentleman, however, seemed to be as ignorant of the forms of the House as of the common modes of business. He might have known that, though it be sometimes convenient to ask and to communicate information by question and answer, that no discussion can regularly take place, except when a motion was before the House. With the Speaker's indulgence, he was always ready to answer any question respecting public business which it was fair and candid to put; but he saw no reason why opinions upon any subject should be extorted from him before it came regularly under discussion. How did he stand on the present occasion? He had brought down a Message from the King, and all that was necessary for him to have said, was to move that it be taken into consideration the next day. Instead of this, however, he had given notice, which he need not to have done, of every thing he intended to propose; but because he had not explained himself upon a subject different from these propositions, he was accused of atrocious arrogance. As to the motion of the honourable Gentleman, what was it in point of fact? A subject of great national importance, which ought to be discussed with calmness and firmness, and which had that day been submitted to the deliberation of the House, was deferred for consideration till the next day. The honourable Gentleman, however, had seized upon one particular branch of the subject, and one of the most important, and pressed the House to come to an immediate decision upon it. This he

he had done upon two grounds, 1st, The unconstitutional nature of what he was pleased to term a requisition; and secondly, the mode in which the application was made to the House. If the public safety required that the measure should be instantly taken, it was surely much better that it should be executed in the most summary way, for had application come from the Bank after danger was apprehended, the apprehensions might have been realized, while the deliberations upon the remedy were pending; and with respect to the other ground of the motion, it involved the expediency of the order, which would be discussed the next day. He could only say that the king's Ministers had been guided by a concern for the public safety; that if they had trespassed upon the laws they submitted to the candour of the House, conscious that had they not taken the step which has been adopted, they would have been deficient in the first duty they owed to their country. Whether they would be justified, indemnified, or punished would be matter of subsequent deliberation.

The honourable Gentleman asked what right Government had to make a reserve of the cash of the Bank? He replied, that with the Bank, as a bank, Government had no right to interfere, but he did not think it disingenuous or unfair to state that if Ministers knew there was a greater run upon the Bank, and that more cash was carried from the metropolis than was consistent with the permanence of those sources from which the public service was to be defrayed, it was their duty to interfere. The honourable Gentleman ascribed the present diminution of money entirely to the sums which had been sent abroad to the Emperor. So far was this from corresponding with the fact, that last year not the smallest inconvenience was felt, and for this reason, that it was so arranged that but a small proportion of the money sent abroad consisted of specie. Yet this was assumed as a principal ground of the hon. Gentleman's motion. He next assumed that the cause of the measure being adopted was the exigency of foreign, not of home service. And as if these were not enough, he assumed that the House ought to come to an immediate decision upon one branch of a subject, the whole of which was to be discussed the next day. In the mean time, what, he asked, would be the consequence of this decision were it carried into effect as he would have it? If there was one subject more grave, more weighty, or more important than another, it was the subject of this motion which the honourable Gentleman wished should be decided colla-

terally, without examination and without notice. His motion would have the effect of a declaration of the British Parliament, that without deliberation they would give no further aid to the Emperor, even supposing that the war is to be continued. He concluded with moving the order of the day.

Mr. *Sheridan* replied, that if the hon. Gentleman had attended to the latter part of his motion it would have spared him the latter part of his speech.

Mr. *Fox* adverted to the observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer respecting questions which he considered himself bound or not bound to answer.—The learned Gentleman had put a question to him in very plain and distinct terms, not as to a member of parliament, but as to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and this he had refused to answer. And upon what day? Was that the day on which forms were to be opposed to substance? Was that the day in which public information was to be obstructed by points of etiquette, a day on which every regulation had been broken, and all laws had been violated. The honourable Gentleman excused himself by saying that he did not understand the question. He thought, for his own part, that it was distinctly enough stated, and if it was not, it was explained by the documents on the table. But the honourable Gentleman added, that he was not bound to answer a wild and extravagant question. Was it, however, a question deserving either of these epithets, the purpose of which was to ascertain, whether the public engaged to pay its creditors in money or in something else, which would virtually imply an act of national bankruptcy? He would not take upon him to say, whether silence on such an occasion was arrogant or not, but he would say that it did not shew a proper feeling either of the state of the country or for the anxiety of Gentlemen in that House. As to the latter part of his speech the honourable Gentleman had certainly not attended to the motion, or he would not have delivered it. His honourable friend did not call upon the House to decide whether more assistance was to be granted to the Emperor. That deliberation upon which the honourable Gentleman insisted, it was the object of his honourable friend (Mr. *Sheridan*) to procure. The honourable Gentleman insisted, that they had concluded the reserve of cash to be made entirely for foreign services. They had concluded no such thing, they had thrown no impediment in the way of reserve. Mr. *Fox* pressed the consideration, that perhaps, even at that moment, Ministers were sending money abroad, and all that he

he at present asked was inhibition upon them during this solemn pause, this *interregnum* of the laws. He contradicted the assertion that the exportation had not produced the present scarcity of specie, because it had been frequently severely felt before in the course of the war, when no alarm of invasion existed. And he was afraid that Ministers would not even yet be terrified out of that ruinous course which they had been for some time pursuing. If there was any man who could lay his hand upon his breast and say, that he confided in their wisdom, with that man he had no dispute. For his own part he disclaimed all confidence and all dependence.

He would not trust that the right honourable Gentleman would not do what he had already done, and from which he had even claimed merit. When accused of sending money to the Emperor without consent of the House, in direct violation of the usages of Parliament and the principles of the Constitution, he came forward and boasted of his conduct; how could they be called upon for confidence, how could they trust on that very day that clandestine remittances were not made, and that the system which he had so defended would not be renewed? Was that a time when the public could believe that their Representatives acted to them with fidelity, if they did not upon an occasion so critical as the present, discover a jealous anxiety for their interest, instead of an unseasonable confidence in Ministers? In supporting the motion of his honourable friend he did not conceive that he precipitately brought into discussion the subject which he had thought should be deferred till the next day, but he was for preventing the Minister from remitting any sums to the Emperor; contrary to law, indeed, yet a practice from which on this account, however, he had not been deterred. There was but one point more to which he would say a single word without interfering with the discussion of the next day, for sufficient to the day was the evil thereof, but the right honourable Gentleman said that the enquiry which he meant to propose was to be limited in its object. His opinion however was, that they had no chance of salvation, unless the House went into an ample enquiry into their general financial situation. They must not stop in the prosecution of their investigations by demands of confidence, for in their faithful and active discharge of that important task, the credit and the existence of the country were involved. Unless every individual Member entered fully into the whole of the case, unless the Minister laid before them all the circumstances

which had led to the crisis in which we were placed, they would betray their duty to the public, and become accessory to the certain and inevitable ruin which must otherwise follow.

Mr Secretary *Dundas* said, that he should not enter into the subject which was more properly reserved for discussion the next day. He could not help, however, remarking the different arguments used by the Gentlemen on the other side to induce the House to accede to the motion. The honourable Gentleman (Mr. *Sheridan*) had said that with him the declaration of the Bank, with regard to the solidity of their situation, would have greater weight than any declaration the House could make upon the subject. Nothing less, however, than a full and ample enquiry by the House into our financial situation could satisfy the mind of the right honourable Gentleman (Mr. *Fox*), or save the country. When he saw such differences of opinion upon the importance of enquiry between two Gentlemen not disposed to disagree, he must be forgiven if he begged leave to differ from their conclusions. When his right honourable Friend stated the propositions which were meant to be brought forward the next day, and when Gentlemen stood up and asked all his opinions at present, what were to be his opinions the next day, or on any future occasion, surely these were neither questions which it was fit to ask, or which any Member of Parliament was bound to answer. The purpose of the present motion could only be to prevent his Majesty's Ministers from making any remittances to the Emperor between this and the next day. Surely then the necessity of pressing it now could not be very clear. The honourable Gentleman, after the discussion of the next day, after he had received all the light which that would produce, might bring it forward, or even without any inconvenience arising in the mean time, on the following day. Without the information which the ensuing discussion would afford, the House was called upon to decide that the remittances to the Emperor were the cause of the present difficulties, while it would probably appear that it was quite on the other side. Such a resolution might produce a bad effect abroad, and might be considered as a determination of the House on the subject of giving assistance to our ally the Emperor. He opposed the motion likewise on this ground, that it supposed a connection between the remittances to the Emperor and the objects of discussion the next day, when in reality none existed.

Sir

Sir W. *Milner* said he felt great satisfaction in the motion of his honourable Friend, for he had come down to the House determined to move something to the same effect. It was the duty of the House to prevent Ministers from sending any money out of the kingdom, and to tie up their hands. The situation of the country was truly serious and important. The Bank by not paying in cash, every country Bank in which money was deposited, and who paid with notes instead of cash, had stopped payment, and broken the contract with those who entrusted them with money. In such circumstances as the present it was the duty of the House to be vigilant.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the Gentlemen on the other side, because they could not fairly meet, seemed determined not to understand his motion. In its nature it was perfectly distinct from the discussion of the next day. (Mr. Sheridan desired the concluding clause of the motion to be read.) The next day an enquiry was to be moved into the situation of the Bank. His object was merely to pledge the House to enquire into the circumstances which rendered that measure necessary before any remittances could be sent to the Emperor.—The discussion of the next day was not stated to be for any such enquiry, and therefore he wished Ministers to be prevented from sending any money abroad till it was obtained. The honourable Secretary said, that the facts on which the enquiry into the circumstances of the Bank was founded were not at all connected with the remittances to the Emperor, and that it was quite on the other side; this was strange indeed. He had never heard, however, that there had been any remittances from the Emperor to this country, if this was the meaning of its being quite on the other side, for the Emperor had never even yet fulfilled the engagements which this country had guaranteed; or perhaps the right honourable Secretary meant that the more money was sent abroad, the more would remain; he was not a little surprised too to hear that the present motion would infer that no more money was to be sent to the Emperor; strange indeed it was that the honourable Gentleman should not understand the difference between deferring and refusing payment, when they had come forward with a Proclamation, by which the Bank were authorised to refuse payment of their notes for a limited time. He therefore contended that it was fit Ministers in the present circumstances ought to be prevented from sending any money abroad,

abroad, till Parliament had fully investigated the causes from which the distress arose.

The House then divided.

<i>Ayes</i> (For the Order of the Day)	247
<i>Noes</i> (Against it.)	70

Majority against Mr. Sheridan's motion — 177

POOR BILL.

A conversation took place upon the farther consideration of the report of the Poor Bill.

Mr. *Jolliffe* thought the Bill so defective and objectionable, that he was of opinion it ought to be wholly laid aside.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, that when the right honourable Gentleman had said upon the motion which he had the honour to bring forward last year upon the state of the Poor, that every deviation from the Act of Queen Elizabeth had tended to corrupt the original purity of the Poor Laws, he had expected that the Bill of the right honourable Gentleman, instead of the complicated machinery which it contained, would have endeavoured to simplify the system. In this respect, however, he had been greatly disappointed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it would require a long discussion to shew that the Bill was founded upon the principles he had held out in his speech last year. That the Bill was not in a state so advanced for discussion, he hoped the House would impute to the very important public business which had prevented him from bestowing upon this subject all the attention he wished. He did not mean to press it for discussion till time was given for gentlemen to make up their minds upon it, and though he should be sorry for any delay, he thought it better to delay the measure than to pass it without due consideration.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that he had paid great attention to the present Bill, and he must say, that a worse Bill he had never seen. Its whole principle was detestable. It was a libel on the rich, and a libel on the industry of the country. He wished with the honourable gentleman, Mr. *Jolliffe*, that the Bill were entirely given up. He wished, if it was still to be kept up, that a day should be set aside for the discussion of it, that it might be thrown out at once, and he had no doubt, but he should be able to convince some gentlemen that its principle was so foul that it could not be entertained by the House for a single moment.

The

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that after this he should be sorry if a day was not set apart for the discussion of this subject. It would be better, however, to discuss it when explained by the schedules. Some day next week or the week following, at a moderate distance, might be fixed for that purpose.

Mr. *Vanfittart* thought, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had better employ the leisure of Summer to fill up the schedules.

Sir Wm. *Geary* said, that there was a part of the principle of the Bill, which in the present circumstances, could not be put into execution. The overseers were to be authorised to borrow money in order to carry some of the provisions into effect, which would thus be rendered unavailing.

The farther consideration of the Report was put off till Thursday se'nnight.

The Report of the Bill for encreasing the capital of the East India Company was brought up and agreed to.

CONDUCT OF ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, that when he had last given notice of his motion, for an inquiry into the conduct of Administration, relative to the late attempt against Ireland, he had thought that nothing more important could engage the attention of the House, till the awful events of this day had fatally proved he was wrong. It now appeared that all the blunders and the disasters with which the conduct of the war had been marked, were nothing in comparison with the consequences with which they now threatened. He should therefore consider himself highly blameable, if he took up any of the interval for the consideration that occurred before the momentous discussion of the next day; he exculpated himself from any disrespect to the House in these delays; last Friday he was prepared and the motion was postponed at the request of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the importance of the next day's discussion would be an apology for the present delay. He intended, however, to bring on the motion next Friday.

The other Orders of the Day were then deferred.
Adjourned.

List of the Minority, on Mr. Sheridan's Amendment,
 "That the Committee should inquire into the causes
 "which produced the Order of Council on the 26th inst."

Aubrey Sir J.	Fox R. H. C. J.	Ridley Sir M.
Baker J.	Galway Viscount	Richardson J.
Bampfylde J. C.	Greene J.	Robson R. B.
Barclay G.		Russell Lord J.
Bastard J. P.	Harrison J.	Russell Lord W.
Beauchlerk C.	Hobhouse,	St. John St. A.
Biddulph R.	Huffey W.	Scudamore J.
Baker W.	Jeffreys N.	Sheridan R. B.
Bunbury Sir C.	Jervoise C. J.	Shum G. C.
Bird W. W.	Keen W.	Shuckborough S. G.
Burdett Sir F.	Kemp T.	Sinclair Sir J.
Bouverie Hon E.	Knight R. P.	Smith W.
Brogden J.	Langston J.	Spencer Lord R.
Burch J. R.	Langston W. G.	Stanley Lord
Byng J.	Lemon Sir W.	Sturt C.
Clarke E.	Lloyd J. M.	Tarleton General
Coke F.	Milner Sir W.	Taylor C. W.
Combe H. C.	Nicholls J.	Tyrwhit T.
Courtenay J.	North D.	Townshend L. J.
Crewe J.	Northey W.	Tufton Hon. H.
Curwen J. C.	Pierse H.	Vane Sir F.
Copley Sir L.	Palk L.	Vyner R.
Dolben Sir W.	Phillips J. G.	Walwyn J.
Dashwood Sir H. W.	Plumer W.	Walpole Colonel
Denison W. J.	Pollen G. A.	Western C. C.
Dundas C.	Porter G.	Wilkins W.
Fitzpatrick Gen.	Pulteney Sir W.	Winnington Sir E.
Fletcher Sir H.	Rawdon Hon. J.	Wycombe Earl of
Folkes Sir R.	Rawdon Hon. G.	

TELLERS.

Grey, Charles

Whitbread Samuel

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, February 28.

The Order of the Day for taking his Majesty's Message into consideration having been read, and afterwards the Message,

Lord Grenville rose, to explain the nature of the motions he should offer to their Lordships on the subject of his Majesty's message, and began with stating that he should not have occasion

occasion to go much into detail as to the causes which had induced the Board of Council to issue that Order to which his Majesty had referred in his Message. Their Lordships were summoned to consider what was the most proper method for the House to proceed in consequence of the measure, which under the exigency of the times his Majesty's Ministers had thought it their duty to adopt, and which he trusted, after a due, a temperate, and a serious examination of the circumstances that impelled it, their Lordships would be induced to approve not only as a wise, expedient and salutary measure for the country, but as a measure that had become absolutely necessary as a timely prevention of consequences of the most dangerous nature; but if unfortunately their Lordships should be of a different opinion, his Majesty's Ministers even then would have the consolation of knowing that they had acted conscientiously, to the best of their judgments, and like honest men who felt that their public duty ought to be paramount to every personal consideration. It appeared in the course of the debate the preceding day, that some noble Lords were disposed to treat the Order of Council with great harshness and asperity, but surely the importance of the measure entitled it to be discussed with deliberation, with temper and with candour, and whatever opinion any men in the moment of ill-founded alarm might have hastily taken up, he was persuaded the resources of the country were in a most flourishing state, and that the pressure that caused the necessity, to meet which the present measure was adopted, could not be other than of a temporary nature. He had already said, he would not have occasion for the present to go much into detail, and on this account, according to the practice under the constitution, which had obtained for wise and obvious reasons, all Parliamentary proceedings relative to matters in any way affecting the public purse were considered as falling more immediately within the province of the other House, and therefore that House generally took the lead in the discussion of such subjects. He should therefore rather recommend it to their Lordships, to wait till the proceedings of the House of Commons came before them; for the present he should, for this reason, only trouble their Lordships with two motions, to the first of which he was confident there could not be a single objection. It was "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, to return his Majesty the thanks of this House, for the information contained in his most gracious communication, and to assure his Majesty, that he might rely with the utmost confidence on the experienced wisdom and firmness of his Parliament, for

taking such measures as might be best calculated to meet any temporary pressure, and to call forth in the most effectual manner, the extensive resources of this kingdom in support of their public and commercial credit, and in defence of their dearest interests." In drawing this motion he had taken care that it should not contain a single word or expression, at which any noble Lord should find reason to take an exception; that motion therefore he trusted would pass without a dissentient voice.

His other motion he should read as a part of his speech, in order to put their Lordships in possession of his whole object; it was for the appointment of a Committee of nine Lords to enquire into, examine, and report the extent of the outstanding demands against the Bank, and the funds they possessed for the discharge of the same, and also to enquire into the causes that had rendered the Order of Council and the subsequent proceedings of the Governor and Directors of the Bank necessary, and to report their opinion as to the confirmation and continuation of the measures adopted. It was with great satisfaction that he could state that he had no doubt but that the result of the enquiry would prove to the House and to the country, that the situation of the Bank, was what those who were likely to be best informed on the subject had already asserted it to be, viz. in a state of affluence, and the most flourishing prosperity, and that the Directors had done wisely, in acceding to the requisition made in the Order of Council, and in acting upon it immediately. Their Lordships would easily conceive, that in an investigation and enquiry into so delicate a matter as the concerns of the Bank of England, the greatest caution and secrecy were necessary, particularly when not only the public and commercial interests of the country, but the internal government and individual interests of that great company were so deeply implicated, that any imprudent disclosure of the detail of such an investigation might be attended with dangerous consequences, and ought neither to be laid before the House, or meet the eye of the public. He should therefore propose that the Committee should be select and secret, as by that means every degree of necessary and useful information might be obtained, and nothing dangerous was to be apprehended. Having thus explained the nature of the two motions that he meant to submit to the House, Lord Grenville said, he would for the present refrain from troubling their Lordships with any farther observations, but would move the address; the motion was accordingly handed to the Lord Chancellor.

The

The Duke of *Grafton* said, he rose not to oppose the Address, on the contrary he hoped it would pass *nemine dissente*. He could have wished however, as the measure had come upon the House and the public so suddenly, like a flash of lightning as it were before their eyes, that it was impossible as yet to form an opinion respecting it, that the noble Secretary of State had said something to shew that his Majesty's Ministers had been driven to it by imperious necessity, and considered it as an act of their own, not as a measure of state springing out of the legal exercise of the prerogative of the crown. That there was no choice before they assented to the miserable expedient, and went the extreme length of a measure founded in an assumption of power unknown to the laws and constitution of the country, and that they were aware it would be necessary to follow the measure up with a Bill of Indemnity to legalize their conduct, without which neither Parliament, nor the public could be satisfied. Till an act of Indemnity was obtained, it was competent to every holder of a bank note, who when he presented it for payment, was refused money at the Bank, to bring an action in any of the Courts at Westminster against the Bank Directors, a proposition so clear that he scarcely imagined any one noble Lord would attempt to dispute it; nay he would submit it to the opinion of the learned Lord on the woolsack, and all the law authorities belonging to that House, whether till an act of Parliament passed to render Bank paper a legal tender, it was not competent to any individual who was refused payment for his notes at the Bank to bring his action against it?

Lord *Grenville* said, he thought he had been sufficiently explicit on the point alluded to, in what he had said the preceding day. Undoubtedly his Majesty's Ministers had taken upon themselves an arduous responsibility; they had adopted the measure of making such a requisition to the Bank, as the Order of Council contained, on the ground of State necessity, but it was clear the Bank were not bound in law to act upon that order; he thought however, that they had done wisely, and very usefully for the public in having immediately taken the step, which their Lordships and every man in London had seen, and the spirited and patriotic resolutions of the bankers, merchants, and most respectable traders, who had held meetings on the subject, proved the sense they entertained of the salutariness of the measure. With regard to a Bill of Indemnity, it would be for their Lordships after they had gone through the whole of the subject, and had the

report of the Committee before them and all the facts that it might contain, to decide whether a Bill of Indemnity were necessary or not ; in the mean time, he did not mean to say that the measure could be justified by the strict letter of the law, but under the exigency that occasioned it, it was the first duty of Ministers to consider the interests of the public, and not to hesitate in adopting what the nature of the case rendered indispensable from considerations of their own personal safety.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, that an act of Indemnity would certainly be necessary if not for Ministers, at least for the Directors of the Bank and their clerks and officers, who must act illegally, and be liable to an action for every refusal they made to give the presenter of their notes the cash that was in fact his own. As to the time of agitating a bill of Indemnity, the most natural he conceived to be one of these two ; either immediately, or after receiving the report of the Committee. In the noble Secretary of State's opening speech, he had said, that in the preceding day's debate noble Lords had seemed inclined to treat the measure harshly and with asperity. To the best of his recollection nothing of that sort had passed. He had himself forbore to give any opinion respecting it, declaring that he could not form an opinion till they knew more of the reasons on which it was grounded. For all he yet knew, it might be absolutely necessary, though it was now admitted to be both extraordinary and illegal. He could have no objection to the noble Lord's first motion for an address ; with regard to the second motion which the noble Secretary had read as a part of his speech, the Earl said he could easily see that many things might come out before the Committee, that ought to be kept secret, but there were parts of the motion, which by no means required to have secrecy observed respecting them, on the contrary they ought to be made as public as possible, viz. the whole of what was comprehended under the second head of the motion ; beside it was surrendering the authority of that House to a Committee of nine of its members, and resting their proceedings solely on the opinion of those nine noble Lords whoever they might be. He had therefore strong objections to the Committee being a secret one. It was a mode of smuggling business through that House, and giving up all their power and right of judging to nine individuals, a circumstance surely degrading to the House, however respectable the individuals might be. Nor did he see the least necessity for it. The Bank of England
according

according to the noble Secretary's statement was in a situation most flourishing and prosperous. If so, what objection could there be to the grounds of their opinion being discussed publicly in the House. If they were in an affluent and flourishing state, it would be advantageous and honourable to the Company, that their prosperous condition should be laid before the public in such an open manner as to remove all ground of suspicion.

The Earl of *Liverpool* justified the making the Committee secret, on the ground of precedent and usage, shewing that wherever subjects of a delicate nature, or which ought not to be publicly made known on various reasons, were to be investigated, it was uniformly the practice to appoint a secret Committee to enquire into them. With respect to the argument and objection of the noble Earl, that the power of deciding would be thereby taken away from the House, there would be some ground for it, if the Committee were only to enquire into the subject, and not to report their opinion upon it, with such of the reasons for it, as it might appear in their discretion safe and proper to disclose. There was no ground therefore for the noble Earl's objection in any respect whatsoever. After the Committee had made their report, the House would discuss that report and the opinion of the Committee just as they pleased, and would not resolve in any particular way, merely because the Committee had pronounced this or that to be their opinion, but would be left to abide by the Committee's opinion, or not, as they judged proper. He saw not therefore what difficulty the House could possibly have, from the Committee's being instructed to deliver their opinion. They would have precisely the same means of forming a correct judgment upon the whole subject, as upon any other matter, which had been submitted to the investigation of a similar Committee previous to the House entering into debate upon it.

The Earl of *Guildford* then rose and said that he differed entirely with the noble Earl who had just sat down, contending, that it was impossible for the House not to feel itself embarrassed by the report of their Committee, if that report contained any opinion of the Committee.

The Duke of *Grafton* also could not accede to the argument of the noble Earl, he thought that part of the motion which instructed the Committee to give their opinion to the House upon the result of their enquiry highly objectionable, and that it would prove unsatisfactory to the public at large; the very idea of secrecy conveyed something disagreeable and suspicious;

suspicious; nor did he see any reason for secrecy upon the subject, which was of the first importance and deeply implicated with the dearest interests of the public and the nation. Let the subject come fairly and openly before the House, who might then act upon it as to their wisdom and judgment would appear proper. That was the only honourable mode of proceeding, and the only way likely to be free from jealousy of every sort, and to afford universal satisfaction without doors. The referring an affair of such infinite magnitude to the investigation of a Secret Committee, consisting of nine Lords, would create fresh alarm, give rise to distrust, and was in fact a mockery of all Parliamentary proceeding. He hoped therefore an open Committee would be the mode adopted, and the House would be allowed to see with its own eyes, to exercise its own understanding, and to judge for itself unfettered by any opinion but its own, however valuable the opinion of any nine noble Lords might be. He declared he concurred entirely with what the noble Earl had said respecting the necessity for a Bill of Indemnity; he thought it the wisest way for Ministers to proceed for the sake of the Constitution and the law, which had certainly been violated, and it would at any rate be necessary for the protection of the Directors of the Bank and their clerks and officers.

Lord Grenville said, that he could not agree with those noble Lords who argued for an open Committee, and a public discussion of the concerns of the Bank. He thought such a mode of proceeding would be highly improper and impolitic. Neither could he agree with them, that in calling upon and instructing the Committee in the manner mentioned in the motion, the power of that House was taken away, or its authority in the smallest degree diminished. His Grace had described such a mode of proceeding as a mockery of enquiry, equally unparliamentary and dishonourable, when it was well known that it was a mode of enquiry adopted constantly in that House, when measures of the greatest magnitude and importance were to be investigated. When the Committee made their report, it would of course be subject to the consideration and discussion of the House, who would be under no difficulty whatever as to the full exercise of their judgment respecting it. With regard to the necessity for an act of Indemnity, he did not mean to say, that there were not grounds for such a measure. He had not made up his mind upon it; he repeated, however, that the Bank were not legally obliged to act upon the requisition contained in the Order

Order of Council, though he thought they acted wisely, and in a salutary way for the country, by so doing. If it should be the prevalent opinion, that an act of Indemnity was absolutely necessary, on the ground stated by the noble Duke, so far from objecting to it, he should receive it gratefully, and feel himself obliged to Parliament for the favour. Before the debate proceeded farther, his Lordship thought, as there was no difference of opinion respecting the first motion, the House had better decide the question upon the Address.

The question was put from the woolsack, and the Address was agreed to *nomine dissentiente*.

The motion for appointing a Secret Committee was then made by Lord Grenville, and read by the Lord Chancellor.

The Earl of *Guildford* rose, and renewed his objections; adding, that there were words in the second part of the motion which required some explanation; he meant the words "confirmation and continuance of the measure." Surely it was not meant to confirm and continue the stoppage of payment in the Bank! If so, it was a most dangerous project—a project that must totally ruin public credit.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he certainly approved of the address just voted, but he could not agree to any proceeding upon a subject of so much importance that was to be conducted in secrecy; on the contrary, he thought it could not be too public, and therefore, before he sat down, he should move, to leave out all that part of the motion which referred to the Committee's reporting their opinion upon the necessity for the confirmation and continuance of the measure. Having contended for the publicity of the enquiry as to that point, and maintained that the more public the facts were made that served to elucidate the solidity of the Bank, the more advantageous to that corporation, his Grace said, with regard to the expediency of the measure, that had so much surprised the public, he could say nothing, as he was a total stranger to all those circumstances on which it was meant to be supported. But when he considered the ill conduct of Ministers throughout the war, their repeated and disgraceful blunders, and the variety of instances in which they had manifested the grossest ignorance and most glaring incapacity, he thought it not at all improbable that they might have reduced the country to such a state of degradation, as to render the measure, alarming and disastrous as it was, indispensably necessary. When he read the Order of Council, he was astonished to find the unusual demands for specie imputed to ill-founded and exaggerated apprehensions; astonished to find
that

that imputation made by the very men who had themselves raised those ill-founded and exaggerated apprehensions, after having, by their repeated blunders and inconsistencies, done every thing to disgrace the British character, and bring the country to the verge of ruin. Had they not, at the commencement of the session, put the word "invasion" into the mouth of their Sovereign; and, to keep up the alarm, passed statutes fraught with folly, which disgraced the Statute Books, and which nobody could comprehend, as they were perfectly unintelligible? Had they not called for armaments from the subjects, to the annoyance of every part of the kingdom? By their carelessness and inattention, had they not suffered twenty thousand of the enemy to come into the very bays and rivers of the kingdom of Ireland, in which, had not the elements fortunately interfered and obliged them to retire, they would have effected a landing, and by the means of so formidable a force had been able to do incalculable mischief? Had they not since suffered our coasts to be insulted by a disembarkation of the enemy in Wales? And yet they presumed to charge the disgrace, that the measure of the Bank on Monday last involved in it, on ill-founded and exaggerated alarms! After enlarging upon these topics, and indulging in a variety of harsh reflections on Ministers, in whom the majority of that House, he said, had long been in the habit of placing an implicit confidence, of which he believed they were now heartily sick, the Duke said, he would take the earliest opportunity of moving for a strict enquiry into the causes of our present calamitous situation. He then returned to a consideration of the motion before the House, and among other objections to the nature and powers of the Committee, as proposed in the question before the House, he said, he could not imagine that their Lordships would consent to determine a great national consideration, of such immense importance, on the opinion of nine Lords, be they ever so respectable. The words of the resolution, as they now stood, authorized the Committee to report their opinion of the necessity of confirming and continuing the measure adopted by the Bank in consequence of the Order of Council, which was neither more nor less than that the Bank should continue to stop payment, and to give only paper instead of cash for their notes, when payment of them in money was demanded. This was a proposition so preposterous, as well as so alarming, that he should, by way of amendment, move to leave out all the remainder of the motion after the first part of it, being no friend to mysterious and secret investigations, when by an open and public enquiry and discussion the

House

House would be enabled to form a judgment on facts within their own knowledge, and to ascertain how much of the present calamitous state of the country was connected with the Bank, and how much of it ought to be placed (where he verily believed the greatest part, if not the whole of it, should be imputed) to the mismanagement and rash conduct of Ministers. His Grace moved his amendment accordingly.

Lord *Auckland* declared that, he rose merely to say a few words, which he flattered himself would be held to be conclusive even by the noble Duke. It was usual for all Committees to be directed to report their opinion on the subject referred to their investigation; otherwise their report would amount to little or nothing, as they must stop at the report of the mere facts, and where the Committee was a secret one, it was the more necessary to have the opinion that the Committee had formed from an enquiry grounded on particulars, of which, in matters of so delicate a nature as an enquiry into the affairs and solidity of the Bank of England, common policy forbade a disclosure. He would not say one word to the invectives against Ministers, in which the noble Duke had as usual indulged himself. He lamented the necessity for having the Committee a secret one. It certainly was an unfortunate circumstance; but he owned he was astonished at the heat and asperity of the noble Duke upon so very serious an occasion. The subject was clearly and undeniably of the highest importance, it required to be discussed with temper, with calmness, and with moderation; if that was not the case, the country was undone.

The Earl of *Fauconberg* rose, with some warmth, to vindicate the loyal and active exertions of those who had stood forward with spirit to raise provincial volunteer corps for the defence of their country, and to rescue them from the imputation of the noble Duke. He was astonished to hear it asserted in that House, that those corps were an annoyance to every part of the kingdom. Good God! was the only return made for having, to the injury of his health and fortune, raised and disciplined a regiment, ready to shed their blood in repelling the enemy, if they should dare to invade the coast of the North Riding of Yorkshire, a declaration that his regiment was an annoyance to that part of the kingdom? He could not hear so unjust a charge with common patience. The noble Duke near him (the Duke of Norfolk) also had made exertions for the defence of the West Riding of a more princely nature; and would that noble Duke think his efforts done justice to, by hearing them termed an annoyance to the country? Small as the scale of his own exertions had been, com-

pared with those of the noble Duke, he would answer for himself and his officers, that, as far as the nature of the case would admit, they would afford effectual defence of that part of the kingdom; and so far from being an annoyance to the country, they had already been the means of securing its tranquillity, and contributing to the peace and happiness of its inhabitants. He expatiated on the utility of such corps while the country was in its present situation, and desired the noble Duke (the Duke of Bedford) to recollect that his own property might be in danger from riots, or other disasters. Suppose that his Grace's house should be on fire, in that case he might be glad of the protection that his corps could give; and, notwithstanding his Grace's attack, he could assure him that he should have it.

Lord Grenville rose to make some reply to the observations of the noble Duke (Bedford), most of which their Lordships had heard refuted again and again. His Grace had been pleased to bestow the polite term of the "blunders of Ministers," upon such enterprizes of the war as had not altogether succeeded, owing, in almost every instance, to accidental causes, which no Government could foresee, controul, or prevent. In his zeal to multiply invective, his Grace had not only lost sight of the respect due to their Lordships, but to the legislature, and the laws themselves. He had been pleased to brand the acts of the legislature with the imputation of being fraught with folly. Such language was neither parliamentary nor decent; nay more, it was not founded—the laws alluded to having sufficiently proved their wisdom and their expediency, by the salutary effects that had already been derived from them, and the protection they had given to the peace and security of the country. The noble Duke had charged Ministers with having themselves been the authors of ill-founded and exaggerated apprehensions, by putting the word Invasion into his Majesty's mouth, and by subsequent measures calculated to put the country into the best state of defence against an attack, should any be made. It was not a little singular, that, in the same speech in which the noble Duke had charged Ministers with having given false alarms with respect to an invasion, he had subsequently mentioned two actual attempts of the enemy to invade these kingdoms, in one of which they so far succeeded as to land a small but despicable body of men in arms. The noble Duke, therefore, had himself saved Ministers the trouble of proving that danger of invasion had actually existed. With regard to the amendment moved by the noble Duke, he should certainly oppose it, because it
tended

tended to take away an essential part of the motion, without which the rest would be of little use. Much had been said on the subject of secrecy, and arguments had been used to prove that the more public and open the enquiry, the more for the advantage and honour of the Bank, and the satisfaction of the country; but nothing that had fallen from noble Lords on that subject had afforded conviction to his mind, or in the smallest degree changed his opinion, that, in investigating a subject so delicate and important as the affairs of the Bank, it would be improper, and dangerous in itself, to expose the evidence that might be adduced, at once useless to the public, and injurious to the Company of the Bank of England, in their individual character of Bank Stock Proprietors.

The Duke of *Bedford* rose to take notice of what had been said in consequence of his former speech; and first he would observe, that a noble Baron near him (Lord Auckland) had set out with declaring, that he wished to mention a single argument on the necessity of having a secret and not an open Committee, and of the Committee's being directed to report their opinion as to the necessity of the confirmation and continuance of the measure taken, which he (the noble Lord) was persuaded would be found conclusive. He had heard that argument with great attention, and he could assure the noble Baron, that it had not satisfied his mind in the least. A noble Earl (Lord Fauconberg) had next risen, and had expressed his feelings upon what he had said respecting the extraordinary military force called forth by Ministers. He begged the noble Earl to believe, that he had not the smallest intention to diminish or tarnish the fair claim to the applause and gratitude of their fellow-subjects which those noble Lords and Gentlemen certainly had, who had stood forward to add to the force raised for the defence and protection of the kingdom; but the noble Earl's declaration that he had injured his health and his fortune by it, was some proof that he had not been unwarranted in his assertion, that such armaments were an annoyance to the country. With regard to his having talked of the "blunders" of Ministers, and of their having passed acts fraught with folly, he certainly meant no imputation or disrespect to their Lordships, the legislature, or the laws; but what he had said was sufficiently clear, from Ministers having found it necessary to bring in new Bills to explain and amend the Supplementary Militia Act, and the new Cavalry Act in particular, on account of its being unintelligible, within a fortnight after the first act passed. Having himself acted as a Magistrate in the country, during the recess, he could take upon him, from

his own experience, to assert, that even now no person could understand the new Cavalry Act. His Grace concluded his reply with declaring, that he should take the sense of the House on his amendment.

The Duke of *Norfolk* said, he had unfortunately not been present when the noble Secretary of State opened the subject and explained the grounds of his motion, for so he understood him to have done; but had he admitted the measure to be illegal as well as extraordinary? for it clearly was both one and the other. He must, however, strongly object to the Committee being a secret one. He thought it for the honour of the Bank that there should be no concealment. If they were affluent and equal to all demands, as he had no doubt would prove to be the case, what danger could there be in letting the public know it? If there was any thing like secrecy upon a subject so important and interesting to the country, the impression without doors must be alarming, and the appearance of the whole transaction must be suspicious and unsatisfactory. One question, with respect to the Order of Council, and the proceeding of the Bank in consequence, he must take the liberty of putting to the noble Secretary of State, and he hoped he would favour him with an answer. Had the Directors of the Bank consented to the measure, suggested in the Order of Council, voluntarily; or had they only acted upon the impulse of the arguments and persuasions of the Board?

Lord *Grenville* said, he could not but think it extremely hard for any noble Lord to come in at the end of a debate, and call upon him for explanations respecting points which he had sufficiently explained in the beginning of it, and which the noble Duke might have heard, but that he chose to be at his dinner instead of attending his duty in that House. In the present case, however, it was perfectly immaterial at what time such a question, as the noble Duke had stated, was put to him, because it was a question, to which, whether put at the beginning of a debate, in the middle, or at the end of it, he did not feel himself bound to give any answer.

The Duke of *Norfolk* said, he always endeavoured to use the most temperate and decorous language, such as was suitable to the dignity of that House. He lamented the having been absent at the commencement of the debate, but, he did assure the noble Secretary, the reason of it was not what he thought proper to suggest, because he chose to be at dinner; he had been detained by public business, having letters to send off upon that business, and being desirous to avoid losing the post. He therefore left it to their Lordships to judge whether

ther he had, by any thing he had said that day, or by his general conduct in the House, deserved to be treated as they had witnessed.

The Duke of *Grafton* rose once more, to declare that he perfectly agreed with his noble relation in regard to his amendment. That part of the motion that referred to the continuance and confirmation of the measure had certainly better be omitted; and he entreated Ministers not to consider him as acting hostilely to them, when he recommended its omission. Were he their adviser, and one of their own body, desirous that all their measures should appear fair and handsome before the public, he declared upon his honour he should wish that part of the motion referred to by the noble Duke's amendment omitted. Let their Lordships consider for a moment the consequences—put the case either way, let the Committee report as they might. If they gave it as their opinion, that the measure in question was wrong, in what a situation would Ministers and the country stand? If, on the contrary, they declared that all was right, and that the affairs of the Bank were flourishing, as he trusted and verily believed would be the case; and that the Bank Company was, as the Directors had themselves declared, in an affluent situation, and more than equal to answer all demands upon them, the operation of the latter part of the motion would be found inconvenient. His Grace declared, that he could not undertake to say, from his own knowledge, what was the situation of the Bank at present, but he well remembered, when he had a principal concern in the King's Councils, that the affluent and prosperous state of that great Company was such, that they might have challenged their bitterest enemies to examine their situation, to have searched into every hole and corner of the Bank, and to be fully acquainted with the state of their affairs. He still hoped their affairs were in as glorious a situation at present, and therefore he could see no reason whatever for secrecy. The enquiry ought to go on in the face of the day, and not in a mysterious manner, that must necessarily excite suspicion and distrust.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, the question of that day was of so awful and portentous a nature, that he had not ventured to rise to deliver any sentiments which had occurred to him upon it, until he had heard the opinions of other noble Lords, and had collected from his Majesty's Ministers some information of the course of conduct they meant to pursue.—Extraordinary and alarming as the present situation of the country was, he was not at all astonished at it. He had long foreseen it, and foretold that such must be the consequence of
persist-

persisting in measures which could only end in a dilemma and a doubt, so dreadful as that in which they were at present involved. As far as any abilities he might possess would allow, he had made every possible exertion for years together to warn them of the danger of pushing matters to that extremity to which they had now arrived. Years ago he had endeavoured to caution them against the ruinous consequences of so disastrous a system of waste, profusion, indifference, and distraction. Their Lordships would do him the justice to recollect, that, so long ago as the year 1793, he had entered a Protest expressly for that purpose. In 1794 he had many times addressed their Lordships on the same subject. In 1795 he had repeated his efforts to rouse them from their apathy; and in 1796, to use a common but a strong expression, he feared he had *bored* them almost beyond their patience, by a repetition of his endeavours to convince them that they were near the precipice, close upon the edge of which they at this time stood, and of the rottenness of the foundation of which, their Lordships could scarcely form a conception. A variety of causes had been assigned, both within doors and without, for the present alarming crisis, all of which, in his judgment, were wide of the mark. In a matter of so much magnitude and delicacy, it was highly necessary that the House, which had been taken so suddenly respecting it, should proceed deliberately and coolly, to enable themselves to form a correct opinion on the subject. Disappointed, as he had been, in not seeing and conversing with some respectable persons from the city, whom he had expected would call on him in the forenoon, and on whose judgment and experience, in all matters relative to finance and to public credit, he had considerable reliance; he would, nevertheless, state to their Lordships such sentiments as had occurred to his mind upon it, in the little time that had afforded him an opportunity of turning it in his thoughts; and in the course of what he should have to offer, he would endeavour to confine himself strictly to the subject. His mind had been early impressed with a sacred reverence for that most delicate and indefinite thing called Public Credit, upon which he then formed his notions, and adopted those principles respecting it, which had since become confirmed and established beyond the power or chance of alteration. A small tract upon Public Credit had given him his first ideas with regard to it: that tract was put into his hands by a great man now no more, whose experience, abilities, and wisdom, all who knew him acknowledged. The author of the tract in question was Mr. Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford. That noble author illustrated

trated his Subject by saying, that Public Credit was as the soul to the human body; the body nothing till put in action by the soul; the soul itself immaterial. It was not the cause, but the effect; it flowed from the happy organization of all the parts of the material body. It was not to be created, nor to be forced. It was so tender and delicate, that a feather blown upon it would injure it. Attempt to touch it, and it is gone for ever. Its precise seat in the body could not be discovered: it at once pervaded and proceeded from the whole. It both gave and received its animation and existence. It was not property, for no part of the body politic could call it its own.—It was not the King's credit, not the credit of Ministers, not the credit of Government, or the Parliament. It was Public Credit—the credit of the Nation! That circumstance alone gave it stability, inspired confidence in it, and ensured it prosperity. It was that which sprung from a happy concoction of all the vital juices of the national frame, which proceeded from the wise distribution of its parts, and their mutual co-operation; which gave to the national system a sympathetic connection, an unity of action, and a promptitude, which, in matters of finance, is known by the name of Punctuality. This Public Credit was the Soul of England; it was that which carried the nation to a height infinitely beyond its numerical power. It was our credit that set all the calculations of political arithmetic at defiance. It derided the cold diffidence of those who judged of our means by the geographical limits of the island, or the visible number of its people. Public Credit did not look even to security as its basis; it always connected security with punctuality. To this was owing the difficulty which several noble Lords with 20,000l a year would experience in raising a single thousand pounds on an emergency, though they had ample security to offer, when a tradesman in the next street, with a capital of perhaps only a few hundreds, would make the loan for twice the sum with the utmost facility. The known punctuality of the tradesman, compared with the known want of punctuality in the Peer, made all the difference. It was because the lender knew that the man of business was tenacious of a credit, about which the Peer was indifferent. Such was the character of England; and this it was that distinguished us from all the other nations of the earth, and particularly from France. In France all depended on the King: it was the King's credit, and not the credit of the nation. There the King's ministers took what money they pleased for the expenditure of their respective offices: a disorganized spirit of expence prevailed,
devoid

devoid of system, connection, or controul. Here every thing contributed to the fountain of Public Credit, from which every thing flowed; and the administration of the country was, in reality, nothing more than a Committee for the management and superintendence of the credit of the nation. At present the Bank of England, the glory, and pride, and security of the kingdom, was shaken to the centre. Among the various causes assigned for the shock that it had received, he had heard it ascribed to the wickedness of the Minister. It was a gross mistake. No Minister would be so wicked, no Minister would be so foolish, as to bring himself and the country into so alarming a predicament. A man of much less ability than the present Minister would not have acted in that manner. As little was it ascribeable to the idle stories of unfounded and exaggerated alarms. To ascribe it to that cause was ridiculous. It proceeded not from one cause, but from many; and those deep, progressive, accumulated causes. It was as difficult to trace its source, as it had been found to trace the source of the Nile. Every river had a variety of sources, which combined and gave it body of water: these sources consisted of small streams, or rivulets, difficult to trace, and in some instances impossible to discover. In the present case, a combination of causes had created the dilemma. He had only his own thoughts to offer to their Lordships on the subject; but, unassisted as he had been, he would submit his opinion respecting some of those causes to their Lordships, and leave them to judge how far he was right in that opinion.

One cause was manifest—the inordinate increase of expence, of places and establishments in every corner of the empire. This had been growing to a height beyond every thing that the mind could conceive; it was incredible and scandalous; the increase of fees, of salaries, of places and pensions, of new boards of commission, new appointments of all kinds, had not only served to open all the gates of waste and profusion, but to beat down and destroy all the checks of controul, and all the means of correction. Waste and extravagance had been systematized; one scene of abuse countenanced and protected another, and all the corners of the earth were witnesses to the ruinous waste of the treasures of England. Government it was well known was shamefully in arrear; they could not pay their Ambassadors at foreign courts, nor their agents at home. Men in office, clerks, messengers, and the lowest of their dependants were in the utmost distress for sums so trifling in amount, that it would disgrace an individual to have a claim against them for such pitiful arrears.

Another,

Another, and a still more dangerous source of disorder which had sprung up in the present administration, was the want of unity and correspondence among the different branches of office. This was the common observation; it was visible in every department; every office seemed to be lord of its will, and every office seemed to have unlimited power over the purse of the nation, instead of their being, as the spirit of the constitution directed, under the constant check of the treasury. If he could trust to well founded information every branch of office projected its own schemes, had its own expeditions, and of course put its hand at pleasure into the purse of the nation; nay, this distraction was not even confined to office at home; but every man in every one of our foreign settlements, had also his own projects, his own adventures, his own schemes of fortification, and his own sources of expence; so that every one man upon every foreign station had the treasury of England at his mercy. That this want of concordance and want of correspondence did actually subsist, not one of their Lordships who were in the habit of conversing generally in the world would dispute. They had a glaring proof of it in a paper upon the table. Let any noble Lord look at the paper of the extraordinaries of the army, and he would see the full confirmation of all that he had stated; and it was fair to reason, that, if this audacious abuse was suffered in one department, it would be practised in all. Whereas it was the duty of the first Lord of the treasury to suffer no man, be his station, his office, or his rank what it might, to have his hand in the public pocket but himself.

Another cause of our present shock was, undoubtedly, the war; it was contemptible to say, that sending vast sums of gold and silver, both in the shape of coin and bullion, to the Emperor of Germany, and to the Landgrave of that, and the Langrave of this, in fact our sending millions after millions out of the kingdom did not make us poorer; a nation could no more bear constant drains of its money than an individual without sensibly feeling that it is impoverished; it was contemptible to tell us, that, because it did not go forth in specie, it was therefore no diminution of our wealth; it was a great fatal source of decrease, it diminished the reproductive power of the country, and it was found in the annual deficiencies of our revenue, which, again, became another cause of the present dilemma; for, the Minister had, year after year, to practise new expedients for the concealment or the supply of this deficiency; and thus it was that, year after year, they had been kept in a state of delusion, which, more than any

thing else, was mortal to the delicate frame of public credit. It had been said that, in this continued delusion, the Minister had displayed the want of integrity as well as want of ability; that the delusions were too gross for mere folly to commit; and that no rational explanation could be given of the conduct in which he had persevered so long, except that he was both incapable and dishonest. He confessed that he did not incline to either of these suppositions; he could see no reason to believe that the Minister could be indifferent to the fate of his country, nor did he imagine that it could be mere want of ability, of that meaner kind of ability which consisted in arithmetic and calculation; such entire ignorance of arithmetic, as could make him calculate ten millions short of the sum that he wanted within two months. He believed that it was not for want of that sort of ability, but want of another species of ability which he would call power. It was that want of authority over the other departments of expence which ought to reside with the first Lord of the treasury, and which, by want of intimate correspondence and connexion with the other departments of office, he had fatally suffered to slip through his hands. It used to be the distinguishing feature of the British administration, that the treasury was its heart; it distributed the necessary nourishment to the other parts; and every thing flowed from it, as the commanding centre: the other departments were necessarily subordinate; they had seen how insignificant a part a mere Secretary of State had to play, when the first Lord of the treasury exerted his powers and thwarted the measures in which he did not coincide. But this central point of controul had been unhappily conceded, and the first Lord of the treasury, which used to confer the title of Minister, had now sunk into a resemblance of the Treasurer of France, in her best times under the *ancienne regime*. In France the treasury lay at the mercy of each department, the Minister of Marine, the Minister of the Exterior, the Minister of the Interior, and so forth, drew upon it at pleasure, and they all knew the consequences—inordinate expence, confusion, distrust, violation of faith, bankruptcy, and revolution. Such was the state of France. Unhappily for England, we had made three stages in this fatal career. Good God! what a scene was opened to the eyes of Englishmen. He did not dare to approach the measure of Sunday last; he had not yet ceased to shudder at it; he would not venture to say one word as to its necessity or its prudence; he only would admonish their Lordships, that upon the conduct of the legislature, in this momentous crisis, depended the fate of England.

gland. They were brought to the tremendous brink, where one single error, one single slip of the foot would precipitate them to ruin.

He had the utmost and most sacred confidence in the Bank of England. Their probity and their ability were undoubted; it was totally indifferent to him whether there was a secret Committee or not; he was confident that they could safely come to the bar of that House, and prove, in the face of the world, that they were equal to all their own engagements; that they dreaded nothing but the interference of the state, and this it would be well for their Lordships to guard against. This was the rock upon which alone we could split. He thought the enquiry right and wise, and said to the report of a Committee of nine noble Lords, or any nine honest men, who should confine themselves to the single object of examining the ability of this company, he had no objection; in his mind too it ought to be a secret Committee, not because there ought not to be the utmost publicity in every thing that regarded the pecuniary state and circumstances of the nation, but because the Bank of England was a private company, and Parliament had no right to enquire and pry into their affairs. Taking it for granted, however, that it was at their own invitation and express desire, (and he could scarcely suppose any other to be the fact,) he had no objection to the appointment of a committee of nine Lords of high and known honour, who should strictly confine themselves to the examination of their funds and their engagements—no further. There it ought to stop, all beyond it was unnecessary and improper, he wondered not therefore at the apprehensions expressed by the two noble Dukes at the latter part of the motion, nor could he at all agree with a noble Lord, (Lord Auckland) that if the motion did not comprehend the latter part of it, it would be of no use whatever. He would not venture one step beyond this examination, and therefore all the latter part of the motion, and every thing which looked like, or bore the least affinity to force, he must object to. The only way in which the measure could be countenanced was as a measure of persuasion: he was sorry to have seen in the Order of Council, so improper a term as the word “require.” It was a word unknown to the English law, and which ought not to have been used; it was an importation from France. Requisition carried with it the idea of terror, which could only be carried on by force. He deprecated this dreadful feeling; why not have chosen the word “recommend?” It

ought to have been a recommendation, not a requisition to the Bank, and they must never lose sight of the necessary caution to be observed in this respect. The first error must be repaired; if an attempt shall be made to use force, we are gone as a people. Mark my prophecy, my Lords, (exclaimed the noble Marquis) and do not disdain the counsel, while yet in time. If you attempt to make Bank notes a legal tender, their credit will perish. They may go on for a time; but the consequence is certain. No art, no skill, no power, can prevent their falling to a discount. We do not speak upon conjecture; the thing is matter of experience. A fever is as much a fever in London as in Paris, or Amsterdam, and the consequences of a stoppage of payment must be the same in whatever country it shall happen. The fall will be slow perhaps, and gradual for a time! but it will be certain. A few months may bring to the recollection of your Lordships with contrition, the prophecy that I have now made to you. Let their Lordships recollect, Bank notes rested solely on opinion, in that, they differed from the French *assignats*, which held forth the national domains as a security, and no noble Lord or Member of Parliament could forget how much eloquence had been displayed to prove an assignat, even with that security, a contemptible substitute for currency. Let their Lordships farther call to mind that one great cause of the present evil complained of was, the immense quantity of paper that was circulated throughout this country, through the means of the country Banks, and which, in the year 1793, rose so much above its mark, though it had received several salutary checks. There were various circumstances which tended to support country Bankers, and particularly the amazing taxes that were collected in this country, and which passed through these Banks, but unless they were carefully watched much mischief might arise from them. In regard to the increased emission of Bank notes, the danger that they had to apprehend from forgery, was none of the least of the evils; we should have the re-action of the blow we had struck at France; we had made our base instruments adepts in the science, and it was not to be expected that they would suffer the opportunity to pass unimproved. Another evil to be dreaded was that of jobbing in bills and money. Adventurers of all descriptions would start up, the precious metals would disappear, and every article would bear two prices, one for money, and one for paper. Another, and a monstrous evil would be, that it would open the door to unlimited expenditure,

penditure, and we should have not merely a continuance of the war, but all the frantic and delusive expeditions which were now projected would be fatally put into execution. He warned Ministers against all this. With regard to the absurd declaration that the cause of the present exigency was the unfounded and exaggerated alarms in different parts of the country, he denied that it had a shadow of truth in it. Had not two attempts at invasion already been made? Had not the French attempted to land 20,000 men in Ireland, and only been prevented by the interference of the elements? And had they not actually landed 1,200 men in Wales. He was sorry to find that the fleet of England, which had hitherto been considered as the guardian and protector of the three kingdoms, was no longer to be depended on, and that our coasts might be insulted with impunity. Ireland had not yet recovered the shock, and let noble Lords consider that if the design to land 20,000 men had succeeded, they might have done infinite mischief; they might either have destroyed Cork, or made it necessary for us to destroy it, which would each have proved equally fatal, and they might have taken other important towns; that was surely no slight matter, no matter of ill-founded and exaggerated alarm! If Ireland was attacked and injured, England would feel it sensibly, and so *vice versa*. Nor was the late landing in Wales, however contemptible, considered as an attempt at invasion, to be passed over as a ground of ill-founded and exaggerated alarm. His Lordship repeated his profession that he was extremely desirous of abstaining from all animadversion on the justness of the war, the conduct of it, or any topic that was not closely connected with the subject under discussion. God knew, that alone, was sufficiently serious and sufficiently interesting and important to engross the whole of their attention, and in what he had said, respecting the causes of the present dilemma, though he acquitted the Minister of being the immediate and personal author of it, he did not mean to acquit him of all criminality; most certainly great criminality attached to him, for continuing the war without having the power his situation ought to command, to which and which alone so many of the evils, that he had enumerated, were to be attributed.

If these reflections had suggested themselves to him in the course of a forenoon, unassisted, as he had before stated by the advice and experience of whose, on such judgment in all matters of finance he placed considerable reliance, how many
more

more might be the result of consultation of opinions of sensible men and of well informed individuals! nor were the ideas he had submitted to their Lordships, altogether unworthy of regard. Let it be recollected, that he had on more than one occasion been thought to have held too strong language, and predicted what was not likely to happen. His predictions had however unfortunately for the country been verified. The noble Duke near him, (the Duke of Norfolk) had on one occasion expressed an apprehension that he had gone too far respecting the emancipation of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, but they had seen, that what he said had been fulfilled; and so in other particulars. He hoped therefore that Ministers and the House would profit by past experience, and the best means of retrieving the country, he would earnestly recommend, was the tracing back the steps we had trod in the course of the war. He would recommend a sincere attempt to make peace, at least an endeavour to convince Europe that this country was sincere in its desire to make peace, an abandonment of expeditions equally idle and expensive, (the charge of St. Domingo alone, he understood, cost the enormous sum of 750,000*l.* a quarter,) the laying aside of all other expeditions of a chargeable nature, whether comprized under the head of our disastrous expeditions to the West-Indies, to Porto Ferrajo, to the Pope, or elsewhere. Let Ministers give up all thoughts of subduing South America in particular. If we would have patience, without needlessly wasting millions upon it, it would be open to our commerce in a very short time. To take it from Spain and relieve her from the curse of those settlements, would be the kindest favour that could be bestowed upon her, as it would teach her subjects to live by industry like their neighbours, and make them a happy people. No longer send abroad foolish subsidies to Germany, and to Hesse Darmstadt, and to other petty Princes. In short, introduce a rigorous economy in our public expenditure, in all its branches, and cultivate peace sincerely, and we should not only recover the present shock to public credit, but all would come round quietly and well.

The Lord *Chancellor* left the woofsack, merely to say a few words relative to the argument of the noble Marquis as to the danger of using force to compel the acceptance of Bank notes as currency. Nothing that was contained in the Order of Council, nothing that had fallen from the noble Secretary of State went to prove that force or power, or coercive means

means of any kind were intended to be exercised in order to compel the reception of the notes of the Bank of England in the lieu of cash; nor did it of necessity follow from the arguments that had been used that day, that force was intended to be resorted to. In fact, it did not appear to him, that it was a fair inference from the motion then before the House, that any such idea was entertained, and he could assure the noble Marquis that his Majesty's Ministers had it not in contemplation to adopt a measure, which neither the nature of the case, the known solidity of the Bank, (which had prompted so many of the bankers, merchants, and monied men, and so many most respectable characters in the City to come forward in the spirited manner that they had done, to express their confidence in the affluent state of that great Company, and to declare that they would take Bank notes for all payments, and endeavour to make their payments in that valuable paper) or any apparent reason founded in either policy or prudence, pointed out as a measure necessary to be taken in the present moment. When the Committee for the appointment of which the question before the House had been moved, made their report, their Lordships would be best able from that report to judge what further measures would be proper to be adopted, but it surely was premature, if not a waste of words, to be arguing at that time without information before them, as to the steps which might hereafter appear fit to be taken. His Lordship complimented the noble Marquis on the candid and temperate manner in which he had reasoned upon so important a subject, and a more important one, he declared, he could hardly conceive it possible should come before that House. It required therefore to be met with the most deliberate and calm discussion, as every one of their Lordships was equally interested in a matter, on which the credit of the nation depended. Before he returned to the woofsack, the Lord Chancellor said, he should not have troubled their Lordships with a word upon the subject, had he not felt that the inference drawn by the noble Marquis did not of necessity arise, and that such an idea going abroad without explanation might do infinite mischief.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, he was highly obliged to the noble and learned Lord; without such an explanation, he confessed he should have gone away with a very different impression. He declared it gave him very great satisfaction to hear, that it was not the intention of his Majesty's Ministers

nisters to exercise power, or resort to force in order to make the measure of requiring the Bank to pay in paper, instead of cash, effectual. All that could be done by persuasion, by argument, or by example he should think perfectly defensible, expedient and wise, but if force or coercion was resorted to, the most fatal consequences must follow; he, therefore, heartily hoped that less strong words had been resorted to, in framing the motion, than directing the Committee to be appointed under it, to report their opinion of the necessity of the *confirmation* and *continuance* of the measure adopted by the Bank, in consequence of the Order of Council issued on the preceding Sunday.

Lord *Grenville* said, it really was extremely irksome to him to be obliged to trouble their Lordships so often, but he could not suffer the House to separate without saying a word on the latter part of the noble Marquis's speech, as it implied a construction of the motion, which the words of it did not in his conception warrant, and which, if it went abroad, might mislead many. The noble Marquis appeared to apprehend that the Committee must of necessity report, that it was their opinion, the measure adopted by the Bank ought to be confirmed and continued, a conclusion which by no means followed. In fact it was not Parliamentary, or proper to anticipate the opinion of the Committee upon the point in question. They would have that information before them, which could alone enable them to form a correct judgment, and when they made their report, the House would decide upon it, as the nature of the facts stated in the report, and the reasoning that might accompany their statement should require. His Lordship confirmed the declaration of the Lord Chancellor, that his Majesty's Ministers had it not in their contemplation to coerce the acceptance of Bank notes.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* rose to return the noble Secretary of State thanks for the assurances he had given him, that there was no present intention in his Majesty's Ministers to exercise the strong arm of power, or force the acceptance of Bank notes in payment in lieu of cash. He declared, he felt himself obliged to both the noble and learned Lord, and the noble Secretary of State for their respective explanations, and admitted that it would be improper to anticipate the opinion of the Committee, whatever it might be.

The question was put on the Duke of Bedford's amendment in the usual form, viz. "that these words (the words moved

moved to be omitted) stand part of the question," when the House divided.

<i>Contents</i>	—	—	78
<i>Not Contents</i>	—	—	12
			—
		Majority	66

The Order for the Committee of Privileges to sit on Thursday, was adjourned to Tuesday the 7th instant.

The House then adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

HIS MAJESTY'S MESSAGE.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day for taking into consideration his Majesty's Message.

The Message was accordingly read by the Speaker.

The Chancellor of the *Exchequer* said, Sir, I gave notice yesterday that I should first move an address to his Majesty, returning him thanks for his most gracious communication, and assuring him that the House would immediately proceed to take into consideration the object recommended in the Message to their serious attention. I stated that my next motion would be for the appointment of a select Committee to enquire into the amount of the outstanding engagements of the Bank, and the means they had of making good their engagements. As with respect to my first motion, for expressing our thanks to his Majesty, and assuring him of our readiness to take immediate steps to comply with his recommendation, there can scarcely be supposed to take place any difference of opinion, I will not in prefacing that motion detain the House any longer, but content myself with moving,

"That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to return thanks for his most gracious message, and to assure him that the House would proceed, without delay, to the deliberation of the important subject, which his Majesty has recommended to their attention; and that his Majesty might rely on the earnest and anxious desire of the House to adopt such measures as may be best calculated to meet the pressure of any temporary difficulties, and to call forth at this present conjuncture, the extensive resources of the kingdom, in support of our public and commercial credit, and in defence of our dearest interests."

Mr. Dundas seconded the motion, which was carried *nem. con.* and ordered to be taken to his Majesty, by such of the Members of the House; as were of his Majesty's Privy Council.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then proceeded, I suggested that it was also my intention this day to submit to the House

a motion, That there should be appointed a Select Committee to make such enquiry into the state of the Bank as might be conceived to be necessary, and to collect such information with respect to the circumstances of the time, as might be sufficient to point out the necessity of the measure adopted by the Bank in consequence of an Order of Council, and at the same time justifying the Members of that House in taking the proper steps to confirm and enforce that measure. With respect to the first step to be ascertained, the state of the Bank, that already has in a great measure been ascertained by the confidence of public opinion. Of this public opinion the most unequivocal and satisfactory proofs have been afforded, even within the short space that has elapsed since the minute of Council has been issued. It has been clearly evinced that there is no doubt entertained with respect to the solidity of the Bank to answer all the demands of its creditors. At this trying period, that called for the exertion of the good sense and the fortitude of Englishmen, their good sense, and their fortitude have been displayed in a way equally creditable to themselves, and auspicious to the public welfare. But though there can be no hesitation with respect to the solidity of the Bank, undoubtedly at so important a period, and under those critical circumstances which now require the interference of the House, it is incumbent upon them to take the proper means to satisfy themselves, that the measure which has been adopted in consequence of the opinion of Council, was occasioned by unavoidable emergency, and had become indispensibly necessary. It is the more incumbent upon them to institute this enquiry, and obtain the fullest conviction on this head, as it is proposed that Parliament should now be called upon to confirm that opinion, and to sanction the measure by an act of the legislature. I am indeed confident that the result of the investigation will be such, as not only to leave no doubt that the security of the Bank is as unquestionable, as it is unquestioned, but will completely establish the propriety of adding the public security to the security and property of the Bank; with respect to the amount of the outstanding demands on the Banks, and the means which they possess for discharging their obligations, I am satisfied that the enquiry will be comprised in a short compass, and that from the result of a very short investigation, the advantage of the measure already adopted will appear so obvious, as to lay the natural foundation of every further proceeding on the part of this House. It is proposed that the public security should be given, not only
for

for the outstanding claims on the Bank which exist at the present moment, but also for those additional issues of paper which may be deemed advisable. There is, however, one point, which from the novelty and importance of the conjuncture, it is necessary should be well understood. As to the degree of satisfaction proper to be obtained with respect to the grounds of necessity on which the measure has been adopted, it must appear to every reflecting man that this is a subject of enquiry of so critical and delicate a nature, that it cannot, consistently with public safety, be pushed to great particularity or minuteness of detail. It cannot be doubtful to any man unacquainted with the subject, that it would be highly improper for the Committee to enter into a minute and particular enquiry into the precise state of the different descriptions of specie belonging to the Bank, to proceed to a dissection of their accounts, and to state the balance of cash. These were circumstances that could not be disclosed without great imprudence, and the risque of permanent inconvenience. It must be evident that the enquiry ought to be conducted in the most discreet manner, consistently with the object of procuring the information necessary for the satisfaction of the House. It must be felt that so novel a measure would not in the first instance have been adopted without a strong conviction of its necessity. It would be proper, then, that the business be confided to a Secret Committee, and that they be expressly instructed by the House not to push their enquiries too minutely into the particulars I have suggested, but to confine their investigation to such circumstances of the general state of the Bank, as may be sufficient for the purpose in view. My object, therefore, is, to move for the appointment of a Committee to ascertain the general state of the funds and obligations of the Bank, to examine into the grounds of the necessity of the measure already adopted, and to suggest what further measures ought to be taken by Parliament in pursuance of the minute of Council. It is not for me to point out in what manner the Members of that Committee ought to exercise the important trust confided to them by the House: But it should be proved by the evidence of the members of the Bank Direction that the extent of the late demands upon the Bank, and the rapidity with which they were brought forward, were likely to occasion such a pressure as not to leave a sufficient fund for the public service, and that their opinion in this respect entirely coincided with the opinion of his Majesty's Ministers; a strong argument will surely then be afforded that the mea-

sure, which the necessity of the times required on the part of the executive administration, it is incumbent on the legislature to confirm and enforce. This is the only point on which the Committee are called to enquire, or which it can be important for them to establish; and in pursuing this object of investigation, they are by no means called to push their enquiries into circumstances, the disclosure of which would be attended with temporary injury to the credit of the country, and with permanent embarrassment to the operations of the Bank. On these grounds I am desirous to rest the motion, which I shall now submit to the House. The motion is to the following effect,

"That a Committee be appointed to examine and state the total amount of outstanding demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the funds for discharging the same, and to report the result thereof to the House, together with their opinion of the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of measures taken in pursuance of the minute of Council, on the 26th inst."

The motion being read,

Mr. Fox rose, and addressed the House nearly to the following substance—Sir, when I consider the wonderful event, which has this night been announced to the House for a second time; when I take into review the causes which have led to this extraordinary situation of affairs, and the effects likely to result from it; I confess that after the pause which has been afforded me for deliberation, I did not at all feel more sanguinely or more agreeably than I did on the first mention of the subject. The right honourable Gentleman has moved for the appointment of a Committee for the purpose of enquiry, to which, if it was vested with powers sufficiently ample, I certainly should not object. But it might have been expected, and I for one did expect, that the Minister who had conducted affairs in such a manner, as to call for the measure that has now been proposed, would not have been contented to pass so slightly over the nature of the crisis; but would have thought it incumbent on him at least, to give some general statement of those circumstances which have led to that situation of unparalleled and unprecedented calamity in which we are now placed. Let us now consider how he has proceeded, even in the first stage of the business. Every man, who read the Proclamation of Council, must have been struck with the reflection that this was the first time a measure had been adopted by the Executive Government in this country to prevent the Bank from answering the demands of its lawful creditors. The effect of the measure I will not describe by saying that it has impaired, for that is but a weak word

on

on such an occasion—I contend that it has destroyed the credit of the Bank. There is no gentleman so ignorant of the principles of paper credit, as not to know that the whole source of the validity of this species of currency is derived from the circumstance of its being convertible into gold and silver. But when we learn that Ministers have in the present instance not merely recommended to the Bank to suspend all payments in specie, but have positively required them to adopt this measure, we in this country must consider ourselves as placed in a very different situation with respect to the future state of paper credit. If the thing itself was necessary from the circumstances of the time, still I do not approve of the mode in which it has been carried into execution. If the measure was indispensably required from the pressing exigency of the country, and the imperious consideration of public safety, an act of parliament was surely the only proper mode of effecting the purpose. If the plea of urgency be brought forward, and the necessity of adopting the measures without delay, these were considerations on which the House were competent to decide, and which must have impelled them, as in other cases, to lose no time in carrying a bill through the different stages. This House was that particular branch of the legislature, which it was of the most essential importance should be consulted on such an occasion. The neglect that has taken place in this instance is of the most mischievous example, and may be attended with the most fatal consequences at a future period. All those who have turned their attention to the paper credit of this country, must view with alarm for years and centuries to come, that the King or executive government have by the present measure claimed a power to annihilate, by one breath, all the property of the creditors of the Bank. It may be said that such a power would be equally dangerous in any branch of the legislature. But surely the danger is greater from the quarter in which it has now been exercised. It has been found that wherever a power of this nature has been confided to a senate, or to a large body of men, it has been better preserved, and has presented fewer instances of abuse, than in those situations where the reverse has been the case. This conclusion is supported by the recorded facts of history, and the uniform testimony of experience. It has been proved that the stability of credit has always been better maintained in republics, than in those governments where it merely depended on an individual, or on a small body of men. Of all modes then by which the object could have been secured,
the

the measure that has actually been adopted is the most pernicious in its principle, and the most dangerous in its effects. It will not be easily erased from the memories of men, or from the annals of the country, that whatever may be the vaunted theory of our constitution, whatever the national value of our rights, whatever the pretended security of our laws; one word from the King may have the effect to destroy one half of the property of the country. The Proclamation of the Council merely forbids the issuing of money; the paper however, subsequently published from the Bank, removes all doubt with respect to the nature and extent of the measure, and thanks are undoubtedly due to the Directors, for the explicitness they have manifested on the occasion.

After expressing their intention to comply with the Order of Council, they proceed to point out the objects which the measure has in view. They declare that they will continue their discounts to the merchants in paper, and that they will also pay in paper the dividend warrants. Probably Gentlemen may ascribe it to affectation, when I declare that I feel nervous in stating the probable effect of this proceeding, and the more so, as I observed that the right honourable Gentleman, who has certainly more cause than myself to take a fearful interest in the issue of this transaction, seemed to experience a similar feeling to so great a degree, that he was unable to use his splendid abilities to afford to the House any satisfactory explanation of its objects and effects. What, I ask, is the meaning of this measure? though it has been declared by repeated laws, that faith is most solemnly to be kept with the public creditors, though you honourably declare that you will impose no tax on the interest they hold in the stocks; you now so strongly feel the pressing exigencies of your situation, that you are compelled to overlook the covenants of law, and the obligations of honour, and to apply for a resource to the great *dépôt* of national wealth. But it may be said that the dividends are still to be paid in paper. Is there, however, any gentleman so ignorant as to conceive there is any difference between refusing to pay the dividends in specie, and refusing to pay them altogether? Are not the terms of the contract, "That they shall be paid in bank notes, or in pounds sterling, and current coin of the kingdom?" With what pretence can you affirm that you do not tax the income of the stock-holder, if you break the terms of the contract, and compel him to take for his interest a compensation of less value than that which has been stipulated by solemn engagement. Does any man believe that he would receive at the present moment in
the

the city a thousand pounds in cash, for a thousand pounds in notes? You admit then that you are come to such a state of desperate exigency, that it becomes necessary to violate all contracts. Supposing that the dividends were confided to Ministers to pay the expences of the army or navy, and that they gave to the holders certain paper on government security, would they be placed in the same situation as before with respect to the stability of public credit? So far as regarded the principle, Ministers might as well at once confiscate their property for the use of the state. But it has been said that occasions will happen, that emergencies will arise, which render it necessary to break through all ordinary restraint. Unquestionably necessity furnishes that strong argument, to which no reason can be opposed; but it ought to be proved that the necessity was indeed most absolute and strictly defined, that the case of emergency was of the most pressing nature, and capable of being most clearly demonstrated, that should be brought to justify the measure of violating the national faith, and invading the property of the public creditor. The Minister who came down and endeavoured to prove to the House, that necessity had compelled him to this fatal and irremediable act of bankruptcy, ought at least to be prepared to shew that the necessity had been occasioned by no fault of his own, and that the most rigid œconomy had prevailed in every department of administration. No doubt there were precedents for various abuses under which Ministers sometimes found it convenient to shelter their misconduct; but there was this peculiarity in the present case, that it was entirely without any precedent in the history of the country. If this unheard of calamity has then occurred for the first time during this administration, it was incumbent on those at the head of affairs, to shew that the necessary means of foresight and wisdom have been employed to obviate the danger. Nothing of this sort has been attempted, we have only the assertion of the right honourable Gentleman of the strong conviction he felt of the necessity of the measure, and it is incumbent on the House to determine whether they ought to be satisfied on the authority of his bare assertion that the danger has been fully proved, that it could by no precaution have possibly been prevented.—If we are to be satisfied on such authority, if we are to conceive an assertion a sufficient ground of confidence, what account shall we be able to give to our constituents of this new disaster that has befallen the country? Amidst all the calamities and disgraces of former periods, many of which have been sufficiently severe and humiliating,

we

we had still one ground of consolation in the sanctity of national credit. Every Minister might say to Parliament, and every Member to his constituents, even at the most afflicting æras, "The public faith has been preserved." The inviolability of the principle sanctioned its future observance. But now we are even deprived of this last source of public consolation, this last prop of national honour. With the feelings naturally impressed upon me by these reflections, I yesterday came down to the House. I must own that I did not then like some words that fell from the Minister with respect to the minute of Council. A motion for enquiry is now brought forward. The minute evidently threw some slur on the Bank, and as a proof that they felt so, the Directors immediately published a paper which contained an assurance of the affluent and prosperous situation of their affairs. Under these circumstances, it was natural and laudable that they should feel an anxiety for that enquiry, which was necessary to vindicate their own credit. Another reason assigned for the enquiry is, that the public are to be called upon to guarantee the security of Bank notes. On the first suggestion, I did not see any thing objectionable in granting this guarantee. As I have since however, altered my opinion, it may be proper for me to say a few words on the subject. Every sanction given by the public to the credit of individuals, though for a time it may be attended with some advantage, will ultimately be found to be injurious and destructive. If the credit of the Bank rests on that footing of solidity which has been asserted, it is better that it should still remain on the same foundation. The right honourable Gentleman, however, thinks that even with the favourable opinion which is now entertained by the public of the credit of the Bank, there would still be some advantage derived from the guarantee of the Government. It is curious to hear from the right honourable Gentleman this theory with respect to the advantages of guarantee. Happy would it have been for the country if he had not in former instances extended this system of guarantee to foreign powers. Without paying any compliment to the Bank of England, I think its credit fully as good as that of the Bank of Vienna. Without instituting any particular enquiry, I think we might as safely guarantee its security, as the security of some German princes, with respect to whom we have no means to ascertain either the obligations to which they are liable, or the funds which they possess to discharge

discharge them, and of whose good faith we are entirely ignorant. If I think that the Committee would be empowered to go into all the causes which have led to this disastrous state of affairs, and into all the circumstances connected with the transaction, I certainly should not desire that the enquiry should be placed on a more extensive scale. The right honourable Gentleman has, however, intimated that it is not his intention that the enquiry should be conducted in this manner. He has stated that there are some points of peculiar delicacy with an investigation of the state of the Bank, and the disclosure of which would create great embarrassment. There is one distinction, however, to which it is material to attend. While the credit of a corporation is entire, the public have no right to pry into their secrets, nor is it fitting that they should be made matter of investigation; but when once a failure has taken place, or a slur has been thrown upon its character, the best remedy for this unpleasant situation of its affairs, is to bring them into a state of the utmost publicity, if indeed they are such as can bear the test of a fair scrutiny. When we hear in the present instance of some points of great delicacy, we must view them in comparison with those points of still greater delicacy which attach to the subject:— and in this light what exposure of the affairs of the Bank can possibly involve considerations of greater delicacy than a measure which goes to the extent of violating the national faith, and invading the property of the public creditors? the House were called to decide upon the merits of the whole transaction. To assist them in forming their judgment, it was necessary that all the concerns of the Bank should be investigated. They ought to be enabled to pronounce how far the measure had been dictated by motives of imperious and inevitable necessity: every circumstance which had been made known to the Chancellor of the Exchequer respecting the situation of the Bank, ought also to be made known to the Committee; all the grounds on which he had been induced to publish the Proclamation of Council, ought to be laid before them; it was only from such full information that they could be enabled correctly to judge of the guilt, innocence, or merit of the conduct pursued on the occasion. The nature of the case was such as more immediately to demand the most particular investigation. For though there were eight Members of the Cabinet present at the Council from which the minute was issued, it was to be remarked that the responsibility chiefly

attached to one individual—the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Upon the representation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the unusual demand for specie, and the danger of a scarcity of that article for the purposes of the public service, the measure was adopted. Let me beg of you not to imitate the blind confidence of the Lords of the Council, and to bestow your approbation on the mere representation of the necessity of the measure, but to have before you all the facts and arguments connected with the transaction, and to draw your conclusion from the result of a full and impartial investigation. Without these it is impossible that you can fairly absolve him from the imputation of the most gross misconduct. And under the present circumstances I feel it to be my duty to consider the Chancellor of the Exchequer as having violated the law of the land, and given a dangerous blow to the national credit. The necessity of the case must indeed be well ascertained before his conduct can be justified. It must be proved how far he had the means of knowing the danger that threatened the public service, and how far his information was of that serious and alarming nature to demand so extraordinary a precaution. After all the blunders and calamities of his former administration, after the adoption of a step so pregnant with the most fatal mischief, it is impossible that in this instance, consistently with that duty which we owe to ourselves and our constituents, we can repose in him any confidence as having acted wisely and beneficially, without having before us the documents upon which his conduct was founded.

If from the inspection of these it appears that some extraordinary measure was necessary for the safety of the country, we ought also to be satisfied that this was the least violent measure by which the object could have been effected. We ought then to review the whole state of the finances, and to examine how far the Minister has done every thing in his power to avert the ruin by which they are now menaced, or on the contrary, whether he has not been instrumental, by his profuse and impolitic measures, to bring them into that state of alarming embarrassment in which they are now placed.

But as an answer to all this, we are presented with one short summary criterion. The Minister tells us that he would not have taken the measure without feeling the strongest conviction of its necessity. He insinuates that the same conviction was experienced by the Bank Directors. Of the excellent
conduct

conduct of the Bank of England I have not the least doubt; that many circumstances in that conduct are highly meritorious, I do not deny; still less should I think of denying that to the excellent conduct of Administration, from time to time, since the Revolution, upon the subject of preserving faith with the public creditor, much of the prosperity of this country is owing. But am I, therefore, because they chuse to ask for it, to accede to measures that are wholly without a precedent, and that without understanding that there is to be full enquiry into all the conduct of those, who, in my opinion, have brought our affairs into their present condition? I therefore say, that if the House of Commons should allow this Committee to be appointed, they will most scandalously abandon their duty if they confine their enquiry to what the Chancellor of the Exchequer has this night stated. If the Committee shall enquire into the state of the outstanding engagements of the Bank, and what are their funds for providing for them, and shall stop there, I say they will shamefully abandon their duty. They must not be content with any measure, merely because in the opinion of the Minister it is right; no, nor even upon finding that in the opinion of the Directors of the Bank it is right. It is your duty to examine the grounds upon which these opinions are formed; and, finally, to form an opinion of your own.

If ever there was a question in which confidence in Ministers, of which I have so frequently and so much heard, should be placed out of view altogether, it is this very case. If the most ingenious man in this House, or in this country, was called upon to invent a case in which confidence should be put out of view, this is the very case which, I think, he would invent. Shew me a case in the whole history of this country in which it has appeared more peculiarly the duty of this House to withhold confidence in the King's Ministers than that which is now before you; one on which, if you do confide, instead of enquiring, it would be possible for a House of Commons to be more deserving of the execration of the people. Let us look at the case, and see what sort of a thing it is. Is it a case of treaty upon peace or war? Is it a case of negotiation? No! It is a case of finance, and finance merely—a subject which at all times has belonged, and belonged almost exclusively, to this House; a subject which, from its nature, is best considered in a public assembly. Next, let us consider at what time and under what circumstances we are considering the subject? In December, 1795, the Minister required for the funding of the navy debts, &c. two mil-

lions, which he said would be sufficient to prevent the discount from rising. It was granted. In the May following he required four millions more. It was granted. In the December following he required seven millions and upwards more for the same purpose. Can we forget that, at each time he said that what he required would be amply sufficient for the purpose? Can we forget what he assured us upon the probable effect of the last loan, and on which, if report speaks truly, there are circumstances that are highly discreditable to his conjectures upon that subject? All these I take notice of, merely to shew that the Minister's conjectures on matters of finance have been such as to afford us no rational hopes of seeing his future conjectures verified; and therefore, I say, that confidence in him must, on the part of this House, be a blind one. Will the Minister himself get up this night, in this House, and say, that Administration are on the face of things exculpated for every thing that has lately happened to the financial concerns of this country? Will he say, that they have been punctual in the discharge of their duty upon that subject, and that it is not owing to them that we are in the deplorable condition of which the question now before you gives to the world at large so striking, so lamentable a proof? Is it not notorious that the prizes of the last lottery were delayed in payment for a considerable time? Has not the public creditor thereby suffered? Has not the public credit of the nation been thereby diminished? Have not bills on Government been presented, and have not the holders been plainly told that they must wait for a considerable time; and have they not been obliged so to wait? Most unquestionably they have. And the reason assigned for all this delay in payment has been fashionably called—the want of a sufficient circulating medium; but which in truth have only proved our insolvency, and the inability of the Minister to fulfil the promises which he so readily held forth. All his new schemes on finance have only contributed to bring on the evil which he has from time to time pretended to remove. Is it not notorious that he has rejected all the advice that has been given to him from time to time? He pretended to do away all the evils that arose from the increase of our unfunded debt; evils which we all felt, and for which certainly a remedy was necessary. But what was the effect of his pretended remedy, and what has appeared since he pretended to provide against it? Why, that he has so miscalculated the wants of Government, or from time to time so mistated them, that he has been obliged to provide for the sum of twelve millions, after assuring

ing

ing us that no further money would be wanted for the funding of the navy debt; and after all these assurances from time to time, that he was making ample provision, the navy bills at this very time were at a higher discount than they were at any former period.

I come now to another point. The Directors of the Bank often told the Minister what the effect would be of sending such vast sums of money abroad. They remonstrated against such conduct. I will not enter upon the detail of the advice that was given to him at these times, nor detail particularly all the circumstances, but we all know and feel the effect of his conduct; for he sent money abroad, not only against the opinion, in defiance of the remonstrance of the Bank, but did so in a manner that exceeded his usual practice upon that subject; and that he did in one instance against the known spirit, and palpably against the very letter, of the Constitution. Such has been the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and I do say, we are now called upon, by the duty which we owe to the public, to give no further credit to that Minister for his statements in any public affair of finance, the more especially upon the subject which is now before us. It is a subject on which the House ought not to place confidence in any Minister, because it is a subject which we ought most scrupulously to examine for ourselves. If the best Minister that ever managed the affairs of this country were to ask for confidence in such a case as this, it would be the duty of this House to with-hold it. If his father, in the course of the seven years' war, when his measures led to the most brilliant victories, when he was covered with all his glory, had come to the House of Commons to demand such a confidence as the Minister seems to ask by the speech which introduced the motion which is now before you, I believe that, notwithstanding all the esteem which that illustrious Statesman deservedly had, *that* Parliament would have had virtue enough to refuse it to him. But he was much too wise, he had too much regard for the constitutional privileges of this House, to ask for such a confidence. But what would have been denied to the virtue, the wisdom, the eloquence, the glory of that Minister, had he asked it, is now, I fear, to be given to a Minister who has disgraced himself, and ruined his country. The House, if it means to have any credit with the people of this country, must not confide in any man, but examine public affairs; must controul the executive power, must institute an enquiry, a careful and minute enquiry, into all the circumstances that have led to the calamitous condition in which we are. We must

must take care that the man who has brought us into this deplorable state shall not be permitted totally to ruin us. If we do not do so, the most candid manner in which we can act towards the public is, to declare at once that we are persuaded the care of this country is grown above the cognizance of the House of Commons, and that we chuse to give it up entirely to the direction of the King's Minister; in which case we shall plead guilty to all the charges that have been exhibited out of doors against us; that we are not the representatives of the people of England, but the servants of the Minister of the Crown; that it is true, indeed, the theory of the Constitution of England is beautiful, but that its practical utility is at an end, as far as regards the functions of the House of Commons, for that now they must deliver over to the Minister of the Crown all controul over subjects of finance. Let me ask if this will and must not be the inevitable conclusion of the people of this country, if you do not enter upon a full enquiry upon this subject? Let me ask if this be not a case for enquiry, what case can possibly be called so? Let me ask what case can be more violent, and less warrantable by law, than the present case! Let me ask if ever, since the revolution, there was proposed a measure more fraught with danger to the credit of this country? Let me ask if any Minister every existed who had less claim to confidence, and whose conduct called more for the jealousy of this House than the present Minister? If, after you have turned these questions in your minds, and have agreed, as I know you do, what answer ought to be given to them all, you still confide in the present Minister, I will then say you will deserve every thing that has been said against you, for you will indeed be an House of Commons that has surrendered all its functions to the will of the Minister of the Crown.

There has been a custom, I confess a very laudable one, to speak well of the navy. It certainly is a service to which the people of this country are prodigiously indebted, and we cannot have too much tenderness for the characters of our naval officers, and yet we find it to be the uniform practice of this country to call to a court martial every officer who has been unsuccessful to a certain extent, however meritorious his conduct may have been. Now let me ask if this be the case with regard to our favourite service, what should be the conduct of this House when the Minister of the Crown openly and confessedly misconducts himself in an alarming degree? What should be the conduct of this House when a Minister issues a proclamation in the name of the Privy Council to destroy the
public

public credit of this country? Let me ask what should be the conduct of a House of Commons towards him who is at least *prima facie* a culprit before them and the public? Who is certainly in the situation of an accused person? I think it is not difficult to answer these questions. If there are any who hear me who think that I say this from personal rivalry, they are welcome to charge me with it; but they do not know my nature; those who do will bring no such charge against me. If, however, to charge a criminal Minister, in order that an enquiry may be made into his conduct, be a crime, then I shall be content to be called a great criminal. Let me ask, What is the credit of this nation, if a proclamation, dictated by a Minister, is to set aside the provisions of solemn acts of Parliament? Long, long experience has taught us, that punctuality and good faith are the foundations of credit; that credit can have no existence independent of good faith. It has been said, more than once, that we are to trust to Providence in our affairs. It would be a miracle which I never yet heard that Providence has performed towards man to give credit to those who have no faith. On the 27th of February, 1797, for the first time since the Revolution, an act was done in the King's name which has struck at the foundation of the public credit of the country, by seizing the public money belonging to individuals, deposited in the public treasury of the public creditor; and afterwards withholding and refusing payment of that money. What can now restore that public credit? Will any man say he knows the remedy for this? If it shall appear that Ministers have acted prudently, according to the pressure of the case; that they acted wisely; that they have acted economically; that they looked forward to all the consequences, as far as human prudence could foresee, then I am willing to allow there is no man can blame them, however calamitous our condition may be. If they can shew, contrary to the *prima facie* evidence of the case, that they have not been to blame, they may be absolved; but that is no reason why we should not have a full enquiry into the matter: on the contrary, it is a very strong reason for such enquiry, and they themselves are deeply interested in having it instituted. But if it should appear that this crisis has not been brought on without guilt on their part, it must be absolutely for the credit of the public that the truth of the matter should be made manifest to the world. If you shun this enquiry, what will be the consequence? I will suppose, for a moment, for the sake of the argument, that the whole of this measure is the result of inevitable necessity. I wish then to know what the public

public creditor is to think? He will deliberate thus: that although in the year 1797 the Minister struck unavoidably at the public credit, yet what happened in the House of Commons? That in pursuance of a full enquiry it was found to be an act of inevitable necessity, and could not have happened under any other plea? No; it passed upon the assertion of the Minister that it was an act of necessity, and there was no enquiry; therefore some future Minister may be wicked, although the present one is virtuous, and may take this as a precedent, and call that an inevitable necessity, which, in truth, will be only an act of convenience to him, and under that pretext appropriate the property of the public creditor to the use of Government; so that without a full enquiry into this matter you can never restore confidence to the public creditor. On the other hand, if this is the result of the misconduct of the Minister, you should declare it to be so, and by the punishment of the delinquent shew the public you take care of their affairs. These are the only two ways in which you can restore the confidence of the public creditor.

Let us now see what has been the conduct of the present Minister in the course of this war upon the subject of finance. Has any three months passed in which he has not produced some new expedient? And have they not every one of them, without a single exception, proved erroneous? But this, compared to other things, is, comparatively, nothing! Good God, Sir, let us look at the situation of this country! Year after year he has been amusing us with his ideas of the finances of France. Now on the verge, now in the gulph of bankruptcy, what computations upon their *assignats* and their *mandats*! They could not possibly continue either; all perfectly true. But the misfortune is, that while he was thus amusing us, he has led us to the very same verge, aye, into the very same gulph! But while he thus declaimed against the finances of France, and predicted truly as to the issue of those expedients, he fell miserably short of his conclusion that these considerations would put an end to the energy of the French. Their rash expedients have not put an end to their energy; and perhaps these rash expedients will not make us a prey to a foreign invader. But are we to follow their expedients on that account? By no means; we are not in the same relative situation with regard to the rest of the world. We depend more upon our commercial credit than they do. The Minister has conducted the war upon the hope that we should be able to defeat the French by a contest of finance; and you now see the expedients to which we are driven, by which we have

have destroyed the whole of our paper credit. I am aware that I may be answered, that I propose my *panacea*; an enquiry. I plead guilty to that charge: but my panacea has never been tried; the Minister's opposition to it has been tried repeatedly; namely, confidence in him. The public have seen the effect of that opposition. All I ask is, that my remedy may be tried; it can never be worse than his. We have for a long time had a confiding House of Commons. I want now an enquiring House of Commons. I say, that with an enquiring House of Commons, even although it should be an indifferent one with regard to talents, and with a Minister of very ordinary capacity, we shall be able to do more for the service of the people of this country, than with an House of Commons composed of the best talents that ever adorned any senate, and a Minister of the first abilities would be able to do, if that House should implicitly confide in that Minister. If therefore I have in an uniform tone called for an enquiry, and the House has been as monotonous, as certainly it hitherto has, in confiding, it is not wonderful that we are in our present condition. I say, that without enquiring into the cause of our calamities, the public neither will nor ought to be satisfied. I say further, that the House ought, for the sake of its credit with the public, to enter into a full enquiry upon this matter, for the authority of an enquiring is much greater than that of a confiding House of Commons.

In the course of what I have said, I have abstained from much observation upon what I think will be the effect of all the measure that is now before us. I think that in many parts of the measure it is impossible to conceive any thing that will be more mischievous to this country. I cannot put any thing in competition with the danger of refusing to pay the public creditor. The breach of faith is to me more alarming than any thing that I have been able to present to my mind. If any thing else is placed before my view, I will endeavour to judge of it; but I am unable to place any thing before it myself that equals this in danger. "The exigency of the public service" is the phrase which is made use of. I am ready, however, to allow that I have altered my opinion since yesterday upon that part of this subject; and I now declare, that I do not think any other measure so dangerous as this appears to be could have been chosen. It may be said, that paying the army with depreciated paper would be a great and dangerous evil. I am ready to admit it would be a great and dangerous evil; but I think, upon mature reflexion, that that evil, great as it would be, would not be equal to this, because the effect of it is not likely to be

so lasting. I think that by this measure we shall be on the very verge, aye, even in the gulph of ruin! I did not think that, even under the measures of the present Administration, our total ruin was become so near. It is our duty, if possible, to retrieve our affairs; but if you persist in confiding in the Minister our ruin is inevitable!

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, that when information was received that this measure was to be adopted, all the bankers were struck with consternation. They did not know whether they should be able to keep open their shops. He trembled for the consequences. Bank paper must necessarily fall into discredit. He really feared it would fall into as low a condition as even *assignats* or *mandats*. All the assurances of the Chancellor of the Exchequer would never beat down this plain dictate of common sense, that by his conduct the Bank had been compelled to commit an act of insolvency, by refusing specie for its paper. The Minister had left us in the dark respecting the apprehension of an invasion. Perhaps much of the specie of this kingdom had already been buried under ground. He believed that more money had been buried in Germany. It appeared to him that the appointment of a Committee, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had moved for, would answer no good purpose without a full and complete enquiry into all the circumstances that have led us to this dreadful situation. Such a Committee as was here proposed, he was persuaded would be nugatory, and therefore this proposition should have his negative.

Mr. *Martin* said, that on a subject of so much delicacy as this was, he did not wish to trouble the House with many observations. He could not help, however, taking notice that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proposed an enquiry, which in its nature must be a partial one. A superficial or partial enquiry into a question of accounts, for so this was, appeared to him to be an absurdity upon the face of it, and therefore he could not vote for it. He was ready, however, to agree to any measure that appeared to him to have a rational tendency to support public credit.

Sir *John Sinclair* said, that the only way which appeared to him to be rational in judging what ought to be done in future, was to look at what had been done in former times; for which purpose he should desire the entry on the Journals in the year 1696 to be read; which being done, he observed, that the House would perceive there had been an enquiry into the affairs of the Bank, by a person deputed by the House for that purpose. That enquiry had not been a partial enquiry. We should, therefore,

therefore, know all the circumstances that led to that which we now feel. He hoped we should not adopt any measure by which the character and prosperity of the country should be injured. There was a consideration that appeared to him to be of great importance to our welfare, namely, that the people of this country should be well assured of the pure spirit and independence of their Representatives in Parliament. He was confident that this subject had not hitherto been viewed in that important manner to which it was entitled. He had learnt from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was the intention of Government that the notes of the Bank of England should be received from individuals to the public; upon which there was one observation which appeared to him to be extremely necessary. While the notes of the Bank continue in credit, they may be received by the public from the individual, and the revenue will not suffer; but if they should fall in credit, the revenue must necessarily be diminished; and the loss in that respect will be a loss to the public in the most serious way, because it will be so much diminution to the revenue. The next point to be considered was, Whether Bank notes were to be deemed a legal tender from the public to the individual? He was really sorry to say, as one who had paid some attention to finance, that, unless this was enacted by law, it would be impossible to carry on public affairs, for there was not specie enough in this country to pay all the public creditors; therefore Bank notes must go out of the Exchequer in aid of the specie, there being not enough of it to pay all the public creditors. The next point of view was, Whether Bank notes should be considered as legal tender from one individual to another? Unless they were so, he was persuaded that one half of the public might be sent to jail for debt, and the other half would afterwards become bankrupts. The most important light in which these things should be considered altogether was, the effect which the whole would have on foreigners. The depreciation of Bank paper would alter the price of every article that was purchased abroad. It would change the face of exchange all over Europe. The stability of the commerce of the universe rested on the credit of the Bank of England; of which we should soon see the effect from Russia, and other parts of the globe. He had formed an opinion upon this matter long ago. He held in his hand a copy of a letter which he wrote to the Bank in 1795, and which, if necessary, he would read to the House, in which he recommended to the Bank the propriety of issuing 2l. and 3l. notes, and also notes not immediately convertible into cash.

He thought this a very serious subject. He trusted that if a Committee be appointed, it would consist of able and independent men, and not of persons who, from their prejudices, habits, or connections, would wish either to support or oppose Administration; that in their report they would state the subject with truth and justice. He trusted also, that, under proper management, we may be able to extricate ourselves from our present difficulties.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, it appeared to him totally impossible for him to support the motion, inasmuch as he thought the House could not be justified in acceding to a motion which limited the Committee to such a superficial enquiry. The measure resorted to by Government appeared to be a direct injury to the Bank of England; first, with regard to the Order of Council; and, secondly, by the House confirming such order, and it was a violation of their property. He never heard that any request had been made on the part of the Bank for the interference or assistance of the arm of Government; nor could he conceive the justice of Government, in the first instance, making the Bank a corporation of bankers, and afterwards exonerating them from paying the money deposited in their hands. Such a requisition as had been made of the public money, by an Order of Council, he considered as a most palpable injury done to the public. If it was an injury to the Bank, it became a very necessary and natural enquiry, why the respectable body of men, who composed it, did not reject such a proposition from Government? And it would not be a matter of wonder if the proprietors at large were to demand of those interested, how they came to consent to such a measure. With respect to the proposal of referring the whole business to a Secret Committee, who were to report their opinion to Parliament, he thought the Bank and the Proprietors of the Bank ought not to submit to have those for trustees of the national purse, over whom they had no controul. The partnership between the Government and the Bank was compulsive: and it was unjust, as being a partnership between an insolvent Government, which required a solvent company to bolster up its ruined finances; it was of all other partnerships the least to be desired. It was like a man compelling another who was solvent to declare himself a bankrupt, and then insisting on having the management of his affairs. It was not difficult to form a judgment how the Bank submitted to such a partnership; it was the consequence of the overgrown power of the Government which influenced and directed every species of financial concern whatever. Every one knew what the difficulties of the commercial

mercial world had been, on account of the great scarcity of what was called the circulating medium; that difficulty had been chiefly remedied by the liberal manner in which the Bank had discounted the notes of the merchants. This circumstance made the merchants fearful of opposing any thing adopted either by the Bank or Government. Men were apprehensive of being marked characters, if they attempted to set themselves in opposition, or endeavour to counteract the views of Government. That this was the case he was convinced from his own knowledge, for a merchant had told him the preceding day, that when he attended the meeting at the Mansion-House, there were several questions which he wished to have put, but he did not dare to put them. He did not dare to hold himself out as an individual, who thought fit to interpose between a measure sanctioned by Government. The honourable Gentleman said, that with respect to the utility of a secret Committee, he thought it would be of none, for he would much rather take the word of the Directors of the Bank, as to the responsibility and solidity of their fund, than he would the report of a secret Committee of the House of Commons, which only had the power of examining in the partial manner it was intended this should. In fact, he was persuaded of the responsibility of the Bank, and he was also persuaded that the alarm which the Order of Council had created in the minds of the people, would be neither increased nor diminished by the report. It would stand just as it did at present. But did the House imagine that the way to restore its responsibility was to confirm its bankruptcy? it was clear that the first time the Bank refused to pay its notes in specie, in consequence of the Order of Council, it did commit an act of bankruptcy. For these reasons he conceived the motion nugatory, and should oppose it, unless some arguments should induce him to alter his opinion.

Lord Wycombe said it was with very deep concern he reflected that the greater part of the speeches he had heard upon this subject would have no better effect out of doors than the measure which was before them. Much as the Crown had lost with respect to its contest with foreign enemies, it had gained, and triumphed over the rights and liberties, and sacrificed the interests of its British subjects. That House had proceeded upon every thing just as the Minister had thought fit to propose, for a great length of time. In the proceedings for these last four years, and more particularly of the last two, they had been quite unmindful

of

of the public rights and liberties of the people.—They had availed themselves of the public torpor, and the public ignorance, to deprive them of their dearest rights. They had in their inquisitorial functions over executive power been so indolent, in their encroachment upon popular right so active, that the poor were so taxed and shackled, as to have nothing left that was worth regarding, and the rich were only waiting for an opportunity to see peace restored, in order that they might seek their enjoyments in another country. Of the present Parliament it became him to say nothing. He should not have troubled the House with one word on this occasion, if he were not convinced of the necessity of something being done from a recent instance of what had happened. He was alarmed indeed at the consequence to which this measure was leading us. He had long thought very unfavourably of the affairs of this country, but he did not think that so very soon after the conclusion of a treaty of negotiation, which was not a trial for peace, but a trial of skill between the parties, where the only point in dispute was, which of the parties should furnish the best apology for the continuance of the war. He should not think, he said, that Ministers would so soon have brought on the ruin of this country. He would hardly have thought that Ministers would have insisted on Belgium as the *fine qua non* of peace, and that the public credit of this country was to be the price of their so insisting. The measure now before the House might be justifiable, because it might be indispensable on other grounds, but he could not help regretting the dark and sinister manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had brought it forward. It was not fit that the public should be kept in suspense. It would ill become the House to take steps in the dark. If he had reason to believe that the suspension of payment required by the Privy Council was necessary for the public purposes, and he had reason to believe it was intended to pursue this to remove a public pressure at home, he should have no objection to accede; but as he was inclined to fear from the various circumstances, from the scandalous treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, that all this was intended merely to cover a design of sending money to the continent to carry on the war, he was bound in duty to give it his negative. If he thought that any thing, by way of relieving this country, was seriously intended by it, he should, to make it in his opinion effectual, move an amendment upon it, but as he thought it
bad

bad *ab initio*, he must oppose it. The House should reflect on the evils which such a measure as this would not fail to produce. It would fall the value of the paper currency of the kingdom.—He had seen the misery which that had produced in other parts of the world, by raising most rapidly the price of all provisions, and bringing on a train of misery with which that House was unacquainted.

Mr. *Pollen* was of opinion that the enquiry which ought to be entered into should be of the most extensive nature. He disagreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the House ought to be satisfied with the partial enquiry which was proposed. Though he thus thought that the enquiry should be a general one into all the circumstances which produced the present necessity, administration had not forfeited his confidence. If, upon enquiry, however, it should appear that they were undeserving of it, he then considered it as his public duty to withdraw it from them. He should vote for a full enquiry into the circumstances which had led to the present situation of the country.

Mr. *C. Yorke* remarked, that as the only difference of opinion seemed to be as to the extent or limitation of the powers with which the Committee of enquiry should be invested, in his opinion an enquiry of that nature and extent which some Gentlemen wished for, would open a door to dangerous procrastination. It appeared to him highly necessary that an immediate report should be brought in.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* said, that as soon as he heard of the Order of Privy Council, he was filled with alarm for the situation of manufacturers, and instantly waited on the Bank Directors, in the anxious hope that some reserve had been made in favour of that useful and industrious description of men. But much to his concern, he found that no such reserve had been made. He had the honour to represent a manufacturing town; and he had instructions from his constituents to enquire what method would be recommended to enable them to carry on their business, and to answer the many demands to which it naturally exposed them.—He did not intend to put any trifling or unnecessary question; with a view to embarrass Ministers, but in the desire to obviate the difficulties in which manufacturers must be involved, and, by a timely removal of them, to promote and secure the peace and tranquillity of the country. And, indeed, no method should be left untried, that could tend to compose the public mind, which was considerably agitated by

by the present aspect of affairs. A rumour had gone abroad, that it was the intention of the Bank to issue small notes, of one and two guineas each, and he was exceedingly solicitous to know if the rumour had any foundation, as such an expedient, if put in practice, would considerably quiet the alarm that prevailed in manufacturing towns, and enable manufacturers to answer the many claims that are continually made on them.

But if he shrunk from the proposed enquiry, by which alone the propriety of his conduct could be ascertained, then he must suspend his former favourable opinion, and withhold his confidence in future, unless arguments be hereafter adduced to justify him in the continuance of a confidence which he felt reluctant to withdraw. He trusted little or not at all to any financial skill of his own; but he relied much on what had fallen from an honourable Baronet (Sir John Sinclair), whose deep information in this and every other branch of useful knowledge, was generally and deservedly acknowledged; our system of finance, the worthy Baronet conceived might be materially corrected and improved, and with a view to that improvement he would vote for the general enquiry, unless, as he said before, some convincing reasons were brought forward to induce him to alter his opinion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the necessity of providing for small payments, had suggested the idea of doing something with this view. The Bank, therefore, in contemplation of the proclamation, has intended to issue small notes, and he hoped this might be done in a few days. It was not, however, quite clear whether, by law, any notes below five pounds could be issued. This appeared so simple a point, that he was convinced the House would be of opinion that the circumstance ought as little as possible to delay the convenience wanted. It was therefore his intention, before the House separated, to move for leave to bring in a Bill, which might be carried through very quickly, to enable the Bank to issue notes below five pounds value.

Sir *W. Pulteney* said, that the Order of Council which Ministers had thought proper to issue, had given rise to just alarm. He gave them credit, however, for having so speedily laid before the House a measure of this importance. He considered the state of the country as in reality no worse in consequence of the present step, provided wise measures were taken

taken upon it. The stoppage of payment in cash was not to be held as a permanent system, but merely as the alternative adopted under the pressure of the moment. The motives, however, assigned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not satisfy him that it was to be only for a limited time. Indeed it was impossible to think of it as a measure to be continued. There was indeed a great difference between the measure itself and the continuance of it. In the year 1793 the Newcastle Banks had declared as now that they must stop the payment of their notes in cash, under the pressure of a temporary scarcity, but they soon obtained the necessary supply, and went on again as before. This would happen in the present instance, for they were known to be responsible. Such was the case of the Bank, and such would be the event if wise measures were taken to supply the demand. It was notorious to every body that the Bank had not always beside them cash for all the notes they issued, for if they had, why issue notes at all? It could serve no purpose. The Bank merely kept what was conceived to be necessary. They had value, however, in good bills, or otherwise, for all the notes they issued, and money was within their reach. It was impossible, however, that when an extraordinary run, arising from any particular circumstances, came upon them at once, that they could immediately answer it, but they would doubtless be able to answer all demands. This ought to be fully known, and to be properly considered. Still, however, the causes which had contributed to place the Bank in this situation ought to be known. Such a measure as that adopted by administration might do no harm for once, but if such a case again occurred it would be no joke. It was therefore highly necessary to enquire into the causes, that in future they might be prevented. The plan of the enquiry proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not enough. Partial reports from the Committee would not be sufficient. To prevent the same dilemma from recurring was the great point. He was convinced, and he did not say it vaguely, that there were means to prevent it. But the causes ought to be fully known. He did not think the cause of such a kind as ought not to be divulged. No mischief could arise from a full investigation. The measure of refusing the payments in cash must be for a short time, or the consequences would be fatal. In France, on account of an occasional pressure, the bankers joined in application with the *caisse d'escomptes* that they might not be obliged to

pay their notes in cash, which gave a blow to their paper money which it never recovered. This measure was merely calculated for the emergency of the occasion. It was certain that the country could not stand if the credit of the Bank was shaken. It was therefore necessary to protect its stability, and by a full enquiry into the causes which had led to this situation, guard against the danger of its again recurring. With regard to the cause he thought he knew where it lay; but he should say a few words with regard to the exportation of specie and bullion to the Emperor. In fact, the existence of paper money made the exportation of specie necessary. What was thus put out of circulation must go somewhere. It was impossible to prevent the exportation of specie and bullion. Spain and Portugal were instances, and if the prohibition were complied with, they would feel its bad effects. Industry, agriculture, manufactures, were the true riches of a country, and would always command a sufficient supply of the precious metals.

Mr. *Hussey* said, that the honourable Baronet had made several observations about the cash kept by the Bank, and the consequences of exportation, but would the honourable Baronet say, that the advances made to the Emperor would return in two months to supply the demand for cash, which might come upon the Bank. In fact the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and not the Bank themselves, had occasioned the measure of stopping their payments in cash. It was the Chancellor of the Exchequer who imposed upon them this fatal order. Let him pay to them all the money they had advanced, and then the difficulty would cease. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had in fact laid his rapacious hands (he was not fond of harsh epithets, but it was justified by the truth) upon the sums destined for the payment of the public creditor. He knew that the public creditors had been refused their just demands. He had witnessed the truth of this woeful circumstance himself. He had been told by a person who had applied for payment, that in payment of a sum of 23l. three pounds in cash had been offered, and the rest only in notes. Such a melancholy day as this for England he had hoped never to live to see. Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer pay the ten millions Government owed the Bank, and then it would be able to fulfil all its engagements. It was not that the Bank was unable to satisfy its creditors, but it was the continued demand of money to feed the expences of this ruinous and disastrous war, which rendered it unjust
to

to those who depended upon its credit. It was not the Bank, but the Minister who had adopted this measure, in order that he might be supplied with money, which he squandered for the ruin, not for the advantage of his country. Taxes were established for the payment of the public creditor, but what were those to think who were called upon to pay in specie, when they knew that the public creditor was to be paid not in money but in paper. It was idle in the extreme, it was deluding the people to talk of a Committee such as that proposed. This was mere mockery. Instead of such idle stuff as this, let the Chancellor of the Exchequer raise money, and pay off the ten millions due to the Bank, and then every thing would go smoothly. This was the proper way to act with effect. Paper-money, when forced as payment, must necessarily be depreciated. The country had already been called upon to come forward to assist the wants of the State, and he himself had been one of those simpletons who came forward on the occasion. Let ten millions be again raised in the same manner to discharge the arrears due to the Bank, and every thing would resume its usual course. The Bank had enough to satisfy all demands if those to whom it had made advances, that is, the Government, were to pay what they have contracted,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that he had been called upon so immediately by the honourable Baronet, and the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that he hoped for the indulgence of the House while he made a few observations in reply, which was the more necessary as so much misconception was evident in the manner in which the subject had been taken up. The hon. Baronet was alarmed at the way in which the proposal was conceived, as it implied that the measure was to be permanent. He could assure the House, however, that nothing could be farther from his intention. So much the contrary, that he had not the smallest objection that a limited time should be fixed; and the words from which the conclusion of its continuation was inferred, had been introduced solely in this view. The measure which it had been judged proper to take, and which had given rise to the Order of Council, was one, however, which, while it continued, ought to have the sanction of legislative authority. This was the reason which urged him to simplify and to accelerate the enquiry, upon which the House was called upon to decide. It was a measure which required the utmost promptitude. Whatever enquiry it might be afterwards

thought adviseable to pursue—whatever retrospect of past events might be made, and whatever remedies might be suggested by a general consideration of future contingencies, the present measures required an investigation less extensive, and a decision more expeditious. The question for the House at present was, whether they wished a measure, which was conceived necessary, to remain so long as the extended enquiry would demand, without the sanction of legislative authority? If they were of opinion that in the present circumstances it would not be proper to leave it without that sanction, they ought to narrow the enquiry. With respect to the causes which produced the necessity of the measure, opinions would be as different as the sentiments of individuals. He was ready to say, however, that the Austrian loan, though one of the causes which might influence the great events which operated on our situation, was not the immediate cause to which the necessity was to be ascribed. Was it necessary to go into so extensive a field of enquiry to ascertain whether a specific measure, already found necessary, was to be sanctioned for a limited time by legislative authority? The enquiry which was most practicable was certainly at present that which was most prudent. The causes which may have contributed to produce this situation, the remedies that may be applied to obviate its bad effects, and the means which may be adopted to prevent its taking place in future, were considerations undoubtedly of the highest magnitude and importance, but they were less urgent than the immediate enquiry he had proposed, because they might be postponed without inconvenience. They would afford room for calm and temperate deliberation. They would be discussed to greater advantage after a pause of reflection, and with the coolness of the understanding, instead of being taken up in the first ebullition of passion, and in the warmth of immature consideration. The honourable Gentleman wished to know what was the cause of the measure which it was judged prudent to adopt. He would take the liberty to say that the sudden drain upon the metropolis was unconnected with any circumstances which could infer either the deficiency of the Bank, or the unprosperous situation of the country. The rate of foreign exchanges never were more flourishing than at this moment. The necessity of the measure originated in a sudden demand beyond the usual average. With regard to the quantities of money exported, and the remittances received, it was a point which the House could ascertain by a motion

motion of their own better than by any question to him. This run might have occasioned a demand, which, when connected with the alarm which prevailed would have produced the worst effects and reduced the country to a very dangerous situation. The short question for the House, however, was to prove the reality of the situation which had produced the Order of Council. The causes would be so differently viewed according to the political and commercial opinions of men, that they more properly belonged to future discussion. The enquiry immediately relating to the point before the House was urged in the first instance by every consideration of public interest and public duty. With regard to the observation of the honourable Gentleman—pay the Bank what they have advanced and they will be able to answer all the demands, it was founded entirely on mistake. Did the honourable Gentleman imagine that the Bank advanced their specie to Government; that he, with rapacious hand, had seized upon so much money as he had mentioned? by far the greater part of that sum was floating advances, not now made for the first time; nor was there more now outstanding than had been upon many occasions before he came into office. The advances were commonly made in notes, and paid in the same manner; unless the Bank had no other advances but those to Government, and unless these occasioned an issue of their paper, inferring a demand for specie which otherwise would not have taken place, it could not be said that the advances to Government could in any view produce the difficulties of the Bank for cash. It was not impossible that, upon some future occasion, a loan might be required, for the purpose of taking up these floating advances; but, did the honourable Gentleman conceive that such a loan could be in specie?—This was not the moment, in the midst of these embarrassments, to propose such a loan; and, though it were transacted, it could not supply the Bank with a single additional guinea in cash. Surely, it would not be proposed to give up the enquiry into the measure which he had brought forward, and instead of it require him to borrow money for such purposes, and with such expectations as this. The honourable Gentleman supposed that taxes were paid in specie, and that the public creditor, on the other hand, was not to be paid at all. The public creditor, however, like every other person, often received notes instead of cash. Upon such a question as this it was proper to look at general usage. It was a fact well known, that
loans

loans were often advanced without any expectation of being paid in specie ; nor could the Bank ever have it in contemplation that every quarterly dividend was to be paid in cash, nor did they form their arrangements upon that supposition. Through all the receipt of the revenue paper was taken in the same manner. The observations of the hon. Gentleman were entirely founded in mistake ; and, as he hoped he was guided by motives of candour, he would be aware of the false grounds on which he had formed his conclusions. He should repeat, therefore, that the enquiry which was necessary to be entered upon at present was comprehended in his original proposal ; whatever went beyond that object might, with much greater advantage, be referred to future opportunity.

Mr. *Curwen* said, that this was another rash endeavour on the part of the Minister to delude the country. He had really expected that he would have stopped before he had proceeded to this fatal extremity. The arguments of the Minister at this time of day were a mockery of their feelings and understandings ; he said that paper was in common usage taken by the public creditor ; but, good God, was not the case now widely different, when paper could no longer be converted into cash at pleasure. It was now indeed the duty of all to endeavour to save the country, and to proportion their efforts to the danger which threatened. Let the Minister say plainly what is the real situation of the country ; it was evident that when wages were paid to manufacturers and labourers, the value of silver would rise, and the price of articles of consumption increase. In a moment so critical as this, every motive but that of saving the country should be laid aside ; surely there was little gratification now offered to ambition. No man could envy the situation of the Minister. He really felt for the right hon. Gentleman's situation, but he felt more for that of the country. The House ought to examine into our situation with the most scrutinizing accuracy, and step in to rescue the nation from ruin. It was not now the downfall of a Minister, but it was the safety of the country that was at stake. If property was to be overturned, the men of property would be buried in its ruins, and those who had been foremost in opposition to the right hon. Gentleman, perhaps would not be the last sacrifices. If the country was still blind to its own situation, their representatives, who had been entrusted with the charge of watching over its interests, ought to recal all their duties
on

on so important an occasion, and exert themselves to endure the storm and carry into port the vessel of the state.—Ministers might be assured that the country feels their corruptions and mismanagements. Convinced as he was of the loyalty of the people, and their attachment to the Constitution, he desired Ministers to beware how they tried these sentiments too far. There was a point beyond which they would not bear. The House must act with firmness. They must display not confidence but exertion. Unless the House made a decided stand the country was ruined.

Mr. *Brandling* spoke in favour of a full enquiry.

Mr. *Peasland* said, that the partial enquiry proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would do much harm rather than produce good. It was his opinion that the Bank needed no support; but if the state of the Bank was to be investigated, was it not of much greater importance to know the state of the country? Parliament ought to regain, he could use no other word, Parliament ought to regain the confidence of the country. If the people had no confidence in Parliament, then there must be an end of it. If necessary, the Committee in proceeding to the extended enquiry which the state of the country demanded, might first report with regard to the subject which was stated to be so urgent. In the present situation of affairs, every little consideration and individual attachment ought to be given up. They ought to combine to apply a powerful remedy. They must controul the conduct of Ministers be they who they may. They ought to cut off that prodigality and profusion which had prevailed, and re-establish that oeconomy which had been neglected. They ought to see that the money raised for the public service was fairly applied. They must employ strong measures, but they must retrench, they must regulate, they must controul. Without this there was no hope. Without fairly examining into our situation, there was no chance of salvation.

Mr. *Dent* observed, that with respect to what the last speaker had just recommended, Gentlemen appeared to him more desirous of entering into personal abuse than promoting the public interest. The fact was, that one side was wishing to continue, and the other to get into place. He thought a Committee of Enquiry could do no good, but a great deal of harm, for the Bank was itself equal to every demand upon it. It was the enormous expence of the war which caused the present failure—a war not entered into by this country from choice, but a war wantonly made against us by a people who had denied the existence of a Being.

Mr.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that after the last speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had been extremely impatient to rise in reply. He had been very ready, however, to give way to other Gentlemen who wished to deliver their opinions, with the most of which he had been extremely pleased. He would have regretted, particularly, had he prevented the honourable Gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Dent) from favouring the House with the observations they had just now heard. That honourable Gentleman began with lamenting the scurrilous mode in which the debate had been conducted on both sides of the House; and by way of a lesson of politeness, he added, that he believed the motive of one side was to keep in, whereas that of the other was to get into place. A very desirable object, to be sure, in the present state of public affairs! He further told them, that they were engaged in a war with an enemy who denied the existence of a Being, and who acknowledged nothing either divine or human. The phraseology was very strange. Mr. *Sheridan* supposed, however, that he meant the French was a nation of Atheists. Supposing even that they were, he by no means conceived that this operated as an apology for the unexampled prodigality with which the war was conducted; on the contrary, he believed that an Atheist might be shot at as little expence as a Christian.

After adverting to Mr. Dent's speech in a strain of pleasantry, Mr. *Sheridan* professed his satisfaction in agreeing with most of the observations of the Gentlemen to whom he had given way. There certainly was no moment in which the British House of Commons had been more powerfully called upon to renounce all dependance on Ministers, and to repose confidence in themselves, and he was happy to see this laudable independence manifesting itself in the speeches of that evening. In the last speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, upon which he meant to make a few remarks, the honourable Gentleman had availed himself of the Speaker's indulgence, and of the forms of the House, by which the opener of a debate was permitted to conclude it. He had no doubt that in making that speech he wished to conclude the debate; it by no means followed, however, that because he had spoken a second time the debate should be concluded. As Gentlemen were allowed, however, in special circumstances, to speak twice in the course of one debate, he was aware that the honourable Gentleman had not violated the forms of the House, for there was no person who would not agree that the circumstances in which he spoke were very particular; the more so, as he was left by his friends to have the sole conduct of his own defence.

defence. The speech, he owned, was a very strong one. It had been remarked, that persons were sometimes deprived of their intellect by severe distress; and, from the tenor of his argument, he was almost led to conclude that the embarrassment of his situation had produced that effect upon the honourable Gentleman. In one part of his argument he advanced the absurd position, that were Government to discharge all the debts they owed to the Bank, as the payment would be made good in paper, it would not relieve that public body from the difficulties produced by their want of cash. Was any man, however, so ignorant as not to know the deficiency arose not merely from the positive want of cash, but from the comparative quantity of paper which they had issued, and the demands of which they had not cash enough to answer? Of course, when this paper was returned to them they would find themselves at liberty, with safety to themselves, to issue a greater proportion of their specie. For instance, supposing the Bank of England to have issued ten millions in paper by way of loan, and to be possessed of one million in cash, as a sum sufficient to answer the demand, certainly if five millions of this loan were repaid them, they might issue five hundred thousand pounds out of the million of specie, because the run upon their cash would in that case be diminished precisely one half. The honourable Gentleman had alledged that the dividends on stock were already paid in notes. But were the notes the same before that they are now? Was not the question always put to the creditor whether he would take his dividend in paper or in cash? And when it was put in his choice, he took it in paper, because he might have had cash if he pleased. With respect to the effect of the measure upon the Bank credit, it certainly had inflicted upon it a very severe stroke, and he saw only one way in which it could possibly recover it, which was by the Bank coming forward, and shewing the country that they had adopted the measure from compulsion. An honourable Gentleman (Mr. Bastard) had urged, in very proper and becoming language, the necessity of cutting off every thing superfluous. He was not of a sanguinary disposition, but when he saw a person presiding in one of the principal departments of public affairs, and ruining the country by his measures, he was at a loss to know what ought to be cut off first; but he was convinced that some example ought to be made for the instruction of both the present and future times. An honourable Baronet (Sir William Pulteney) observed, that if the measure was repeated, it would make but a bad joke. If it was a joke, it certainly was one at which the country was

not much disposed to laugh; but if it was tolerated in this instance, he was afraid that these facetious measures would very frequently occur. What then was to be done in order to prevent their ever again recurring. An honourable Gentleman (Mr. Hufley) had said, that, to retrieve the credit of the Bank, Government had only to discharge the sums advanced them by the Bank. But he would add, that it was necessary also that Government should pay all their creditors as well as the Bank; that they should pay the civil list; that they should pay the half-pay officers, who were now almost starving; that they should pay their agents and their contractors. Mr. Sheridan conceived that it was by no means a temporary expedient, but he foresaw that the Bank never would be able afterwards to defray its outstanding engagements in cash. For how was it possible that they could, since they were about to issue a greater quantity of paper, and their cash was seized upon for the public service. The honourable Baronet who advanced a contrary opinion, and who knew more about business than most Gentlemen of equal property, had too much good sense not to acknowledge the error on which it was founded. Mr. Sheridan next reprobated the transaction as a step to associate the bankrupt Government with the solvent Bank; a partnership which, if the Bank Directors knew the interest of the concern under their direction they ought to spurn, and to force the honourable Gentleman to withdraw his indorsements from their bills. But it was urged, that the Bank had temporary difficulties to encounter, and that it behoved them to adopt some mode of granting relief to that important public body. The House of Commons, however, knew nothing of this. No application was made to them by the Bank, nor did it appear even that application had been made for the Order in Council; on the contrary, it appeared that this facetious Council, instead of examining the Directors of the Bank, acted entirely upon the authority of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer. Nay, what added to his surprise was, that not one of the Bank Directors who had seats in that House had ever come forward and expressed an opinion upon the subject. Some information was certainly necessary before the House sanctioned so novel and dangerous a measure. They had heard of the Bank a short time ago sending two millions to Government, and they had also heard of the dividends on Bank Stock increasing. Was it not material to be informed, therefore, how they had come to stop payment at a time when their affairs seemed to be going on so prosperously? Perhaps the Directors might be to blame. He did not say that it was so, but the House ought to be satisfied

fied that it was not so. They were not even apprised whether it was the wish of the Bank that the measure should be adopted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said it was; but he took nothing upon his word, and therefore called upon some of the Directors of the Bank to come forward, and say whether it was or was not at their desire that the Order in Council had been issued. There was something unaccountable on the face of the business, for the Bank to announce its own solvency immediately after it had been ordered to stop payment; and if it was solvent, why was an order issued which would operate so much to the injury of their credit? For his own part, he did not approve of appointing a Committee to enquire into the affairs of the Bank, because he had the firmest confidence in its solidity, and such an enquiry might considerably hurt its credit; but he deemed it highly expedient that a Committee should be appointed to enquire into the grounds upon which the Order in Council had been issued. He was of opinion, at all events, that the two enquiries ought not to be separated. An instruction, if necessary, might be given to the Committee, to report upon the circumstances of the Bank before it entered upon the other enquiry. But he did not perceive that so much dispatch was requisite, because the proclamation, at present, had all the effect of a law, and a Bill might be immediately passed as a matter of temporary accommodation, to enable the Bank to issue small notes. So far, however, as he had made up his opinion, he disapproved of a Committee to enquire into the circumstances of the Bank, as such an enquiry might be productive of evil, and could not possibly do any good. For what was the result expected to be? There was but one hope, and one opinion, that the Bank would be found to be perfectly secure. Why then should the public guarantee their notes? As well might the Master of the Mint indorse a guinea. But what was the nature of this guarantee which Government so generously offered to the Bank? Government first lays hands on the cash of the Bank. Next day Government says, you cannot pay your notes. No, replies the Bank, because you have taken away our cash. Very well, then, say Government, you must stop payment till we examine into your affairs, form a partnership, and indorse your bills. The Bank might very justly answer, give us back our cash, and we neither want your partnership nor your guarantee. Had such a man as Sir John Barnard presided at the Bank, he would have taken the Order of Council and thrown it in the face of the messenger, for in either case it was an affront upon that body. If they

had cash, what right had the Chancellor of the Exchequer to seize upon it. If they had none, it was an insult to pretend to prohibit them from issuing it. And what was the value of this guarantee which Government was so generous as to offer to the Bank? Had not Government broken its faith with all its creditors, with the Bank, with the Emperor of Germany, and with every individual who were in possession of its acceptances. The solidity of the Bank would be infinitely stronger, if it remained entirely unconnected with so discreditable a partner. Mr. Sheridan then suggested the steps which, in his opinion, ought to be taken, if the difficulties really existed. Bank notes ought to be made a legal tender to Government, and Government ought to be compelled to make every payment in Bank notes, except the dividends on the public stock, which ought to be paid in cash. He was unfriendly to a Committee to enquire into the situation of the Bank; but, instead of opposing it, he would move an amendment, That these words be inserted in the original motion, after "*this House*,"

"And also to enquire into the causes which have produced this Order in Council, and the grounds of providing for the Order in Council, dated the 26th of February, providing for the confirmation and continuance of measures contained in said order."

Mr. S. Thornton said, that as Mr. Sheridan and several Gentlemen who had spoken before, had been pleased to appeal personally to him, and also to other Members of the House who were Directors of the Bank, he desired to acquaint them he was restrained from satisfying their curiosity by a sense of the duty which he owed to the public welfare.

That if the House in its wisdom should see fit to institute any committee of enquiry, there was no investigation which the directors would not most cheerfully meet, as they were conscious it must tend to their honour, and to the support of the credit and high reputation of the Bank of England.

Mr. Secretary Dundas wished to obviate, if not the misapprehension, at least the misrepresentation of the honourable Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) who had asserted, that the Bank would be rendered less secure by the guarantee which was offered to it by the Government. If the House rejected the original motion, the Bank would be left with an Order of Council hanging over it, not to issue cash, but to make its payments in the manner thereby directed. Did Mr. Sheridan

Sheridan intend that this should be the case, or did he mean to take off the embargo, without letting the country know why it had been imposed? The first object which he wished that a Committee should be called to ascertain, was the stability of the Bank. The amendment proposed, negatived the original motion; but while the honourable Gentleman professed himself adverse to an enquiry, he sought to enlarge it by adding a question respecting the causes of the embargo, and these were alledged to be a total mismanagement in every department of finance. Thus an enquiry into every circumstance of the war, from its commencement to the present time, would be set on foot; and this first and great object of satisfying the public with respect to the solvency of the Bank, would be delayed till the state of the nation in every particular, could have been ascertained.

What the hon. Gentleman had said of the inaccuracies of Committees, and of the incomplete manner in which their reports were framed, was, he believed, in general true, and therefore much to be regretted. But the honourable Gentleman, under this impression came forward when a motion was made to refer a particular question to the examination of a Committee, and proposed also to refer to a Committee, the enquiry into every public measure, which could be said to be connected with the state of the nation; thus providing an immense additional labour for those whom he thought incapable of discharging their duty properly. The reason why he (Mr. Dundas) wished it to go to a secret Committee was, that it might be necessary to put questions to the Bank Directors, which it might not be proper to make public.

Mr. Grey rose to explain the amendment, and to correct Mr. Dundas, when he stated that his honourable friend was adverse to any enquiry into the state of the Bank. It was not because an enquiry was not necessary, that it had been objected to, but because it was thought inconvenient.

The *Attorney General* said, that the case was shortly this. An Order of Council, without any legal validity, had been sent to the first monied company in the kingdom, and this Order had been complied with. It was universally agreed, that such an Order should not have been issued, without it was warranted by necessity, and that it should continue in force no longer than the necessity which gave rise to it continued. The question therefore was, whether the House should not immediately proceed to discuss the circumstances
under

under which it had issued, with a view to determining whether it ought any longer to be acted under? As he saw the necessity of an immediate determination on a business of such consequence, he should vote against the amendment.

Mr. Fox considered the question of the measures to be adopted, and of the cause of the present situation, as inseparable. Till the House were apprized of what produced the Order, they could not well know, how to apply the remedy. If he were in a Committee of the House, and desirous to discover the cause, he should in the first instance, call the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the bar, and examine him. It was obvious, that the nature of the relief which was to be afforded, must depend on the cause of the evil. If it should appear, as had been suggested by Sir William Pulteney, that the debts owing by the Government to the Bank had been the occasion of its stopping payment, then it was clear that a different remedy must be applied from that to which recourse would have been had, if it had been owing to other circumstances.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he considered the motion and amendment, as comprising three distinct enquiries. Though they were all retained in the amended motion, yet Mr Sheridan, had by the tenor of three fourths of his speech, objected to that part of the motion which pressed the enquiry into the state of the Bank. His enquiry, he wished, however, to be made with a view to shew that the ultimate resources of that company were solid, and more than equal to the discharge of all claims on them. He considered this as the more necessary, because, while the honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had said, that he was convinced of the fact, and stood in need of nothing to confirm him in his belief, he stated their late conduct as an act of bankruptcy not to be remedied. When Gentlemen then cried up the solidity of a corporate body, and their satisfaction in its security in one moment, and in the next, imputed bankruptcy to it, an enquiry was rendered necessary, to establish its reputation for being equal to the discharge of all its engagements, and it seemed to him highly proper, after such language, that the truth of the proposition should be ascertained by some record; and that it should be generally known from the result of accurate investigation, that the ultimate property on the Bank of England was equal to more than the demands which could be made on it.

What an honourable Gentlemen had called an act of bankruptcy,

bankruptcy, was certainly an act of pressing necessity, and the fact of the existence of this necessity could not be too soon enquired into. It was on the part of the Bank a compulsory act; yet if his act had been their own, instead of being the result of a resolution of Government, could this be called by the commercial world an act of bankruptcy? This measure, too, was called in question by Gentlemen who had approved the conduct of the Bank of Newcastle, which, with unshaken credit, had thought proper to suspend its payments, and which proved ultimately to have done so with applause.

The Bank of England had acted in the same manner, though on a larger scale. The merchants of London had given a sanction to its proceeding, by their resolution. Neither speaking technically, nor in the language of common life, could it be said to be an act of bankruptcy to withhold the payment of money, where the person withholding it was finally in a solvent state.

But at the same time, wherever money was thus delayed from a creditor, some proof was necessary to establish the fact, that the debtor's capital was solid. That proof the Bank now wished to lay before the House, and it being in so short a compass, it would not occasion a delay of many hours.

This inquiry into the capital was the first of the three which the Amendment contained. The next went to ascertain the existence of the necessity which justified the measure, and the continuation of that necessity.

The third which had been added by the hon. mover of the Amendment, was, to discover the causes of this necessity. If the necessity was established, he did not see the immediate importance of this latter inquiry previous to adopting any resolutions in consequence of the former two. He thought that Gentlemen might afterwards enter into it, since the information of which they would then be in possession, would not hinder, but assist them in their search. Nothing could be more clear, than that in the exercise of practical duty, that which would admit of delay, should be postponed for that in which there was better time for deliberation.

Mr. Fox explained. He had not made use of the word bankruptcy applicable to the state of the Bank, but to the Government, to which he contended it was always applicable. The alarm which he felt arose from no circumstances in

in the capital of the Bank, but from the controul which the Government exercised over it.

Mr. *Pollen* said that he should vote for the Amendment.

<i>Ayes</i> , (For the Amendment,)	-	86
<i>Noes</i> , (Against it,)	-	244

Majority	158
----------	-----

Mr. *Fox* moved the following resolution, which was agreed to without opposition:—"That it is the duty of this House to enquire into all the causes that have produced this extraordinary measure."

He then gave notice that he should move the next day for the appointment of a Committee to that effect.—Adjourned.

List of the Minority on Mr. *SHERIDAN*'s Amendment on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 1797, "That the Committee should enquire into the causes which produced the Order of Council of the 26th inst."

Sir John Aubrey, Bt.	Aldborough.
William Baker, Esq.	Hertfordshire, County.
John Baker, Esq.	Canterbury.
Sir Charles W. Bamfylde, Bt.	Exeter.
George Barclay, Esq.	Bridport.
John Pollexfen Bastard, Esq.	Devonshire, County.
Charles George Beauclerk, Esq.	Richmond.
Robert Biddulph, Esq.	Herefordshire, County.
William W. Bird, Esq.	Coventry.
Hon. Edward Bouverie,	Northampton.
James Brogden, Esq.	Launceston.
Sir Charles T. Bunbury, Bt.	Suffolk, County.
Joseph Randyll Burch, Esq.	Thetford.
Sir Francis Burdett, Bt.	Boroughbridge.
George Byng, Esq.	Middlesex, County.
Edward Clarke, Esq.	Wotton Bassett.
Edward Coke, Esq.	Derby.
Alderman Combe,	London, City.
Sir Lionel Copley, Bt.	Tregony.
John Courtenay, Esq.	Appleby.
John Crewe, Esq.	Cheshire, County.
John Christian Curwen, Esq.	Carlisle.
Sir Henry Watkin Dashwood, Bt.	Woodstock.
Wm. Joseph Denison, Esq.	Camelford.
Sir Wm. Dolben, Bt.	Oxford University.

Charles

Charles Dundas, Esq.	Berkshire, County.
Sir George A. S. Evelyn,	Warwickshire, County.
General Fitzpatrick,	Tavistock.
Sir Henry Fletcher, Bt.	Cumberland, County.
Sir M. Browne Folkes, Bt.	King's Lynn.
Rt Hon. Charles James Fox,	Westminster.
Viscount Galway	Pontefract.
James Greene, Esq.	Arundel.
James Hare, Esq.	Knareborough.
John Harrison, Esq.	Thetford.
Benjamin Hobhouse, Esq.	Blechingley.
Wm. Huffy, Esq.	New Sarum.
Nathaniel Jeffreys, Esq.	Coventry.
Jervoise Clark Jervoise, Esq.	Yarmouth.
Whitshed Keene, Esq.	Montgomery.
Thomas Kemp, Esq.	Lewes.
Richard Payne Knight, Esq.	Ludlow.
John Langston, Esq.	Minehead.
Wm. Gore Langston, Esq.	Somersetshire, County.
Sir Wm. Lemon, Bt.	Cornwall, County.
James Martin Lloyd, Esq.	Steyning.
Sir Wm. M. Milner, Bt.	York.
John Nicholls, Esq.	Tregony.
Dudley North, Esq.	Banbury.
Wm. Northey, Esq.	Newport.
Henry Pierse, Esq.	Northallerton.
Lawrence Palk, Esq.	Devonshire, County.
John Geo. Phillips, Esq.	Carmarthen.
Wm. Plumer, Esq.	Hertfordshire, County.
Geo. Augustus Pollen, Esq.	Leominster.
Geo. Porter, Esq.	Stockbridge.
Sir Wm. Pulteney, Bt.	Shrewsbury.
Hon. John Rawdon,	Launceston.
Hon. Geo. Rawdon,	Lincoln.
Joseph Richardson, Esq.	Newport.
Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bt.	Newcastle.
Richard Bateman Robson, Esq.	Oakhampton.
Lord Wm. Russell,	Surrey, County.
Lord John Russell,	Tavistock.
Hon. St. Andrew St. John,	Bedfordshire, County.
John Scudamore, Esq.	Hereford.
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq.	Stafford.
George Shum, Esq.	Honiton.

Sir John Sinclair, Bt.	Petersfield.
Wm. Smith, Esq.	Sudbury.
Lord Robert Spencer,	Wareham.
Lord Stanley,	Preston.
Charles Sturt, Esq.	Bridport.
General Tarleton,	Liverpool.
Charles Wm. Taylor, Esq.	Wells.
Lord John Townshend,	Knareborough.
Hon. Henry Tufton,	Rocheſter.
Tho. Tyrwhitt, Esq.	Oakhampton.
Sir F. Fletcher Vane, Bt.	Carlisle.
Robert Vyner, Esq.	Lincolnſhire, County.
James Walwyn, Esq.	Hereford.
George Walpole, Esq.	Derby.
Charles Callis Weſtern, Esq.	Malden.
Walter Wilkins, Esq.	Radnorſhire, County.
Sir Edward Winnington, Bt.	Droitwich.
Earl Wycombe,	Chipping Wycombe.

TELLERS.

Charles Grey, Esq.	Northumberland, County.
Samuel Whitbread, Esq.	Bedford.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1.

NOTES FOR SMALL SUMS.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* obſerved, that in conſequence of the preſent ſcarcity of caſh in the hands of manufacturers, occaſioned, as had been ſtated already to the Houſe, and on which ſome parliamentary proceedings were founded, it became neceſſary that bankers and manufacturers in the country ſhould be enabled to iſſue out their notes, payable at ſtated times; without ſuch a provision it was impoſſible for ſuch bankers and manufacturers to carry on their buſineſs for the preſent. There were laws now in force to prohibit the iſſuing of ſmall promiſſory notes, payable otherwiſe than on demand. His object was to ſuſpend for a time the operation of ſuch law, and to allow the iſſuing of promiſſory notes for a limited time, as if ſuch laws were not in exiſtence. There could not be much inconvenience, at leaſt not as much as could equal the convenience of this meaſure, by allowing country bankers and manufacturers to iſſue theſe ſmall notes, for they would be known in the neighbourhood in which they

they were issued, and the persons who held them could have no difficulty in procuring payment for them. But as the metropolis was to be considered in another light, and much difficulty might arise if the provisions extended to it, he should propose that the Bill for which he intended to move for leave to bring in should not be extended to the cities of London and Westminster, nor to the borough of Southwark. In the year 1757 the legislature taking into consideration the inconvenience that arose to the lower class of society from their being paid in small notes, payable at a future time, from the manufacturers who employed them, they being unable, in many cases, properly to understand them, &c. passed an act prohibiting the issuing of any promissory note for less than 20s. payable any otherwise than upon demand, together with other provisions, declaring such note to be null and void, &c.

In the 17th year of the King another act was passed, which, after reciting the beneficial effects of the former act, and stating that it did not embrace a sufficient number of cases, extended many of the provisions of the former act to all notes payable otherwise than upon demand, and which were for less than 5l. together with other enactments, &c. It was impossible for the manufacturers and bankers in the country to carry on their business, under the temporary pressure, if they were to comply with the provisions of these two acts, and therefore he moved for leave to bring in a Bill, "To suspend, for a time to be limited, the operations of those acts, as far as related to bankers not residing in the cities of London and Westminster, and the borough of Southwark."

The *Speaker* said it could not be regular to move any thing that related to an existing act without reading it.

The two Acts being read, the question was put upon the motion.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he deplored the necessity to which we were driven upon the subject of specie all over the kingdom. The remedy now proposed he feared and believed to be absolutely necessary. It would undoubtedly be a great evil, yet if omitted a greater evil might ensue; and when two evils presented themselves to view, it was of course proper to chuse the lesser; and therefore, according to the idea he had upon the subject, not pretending to be thoroughly well acquainted with it, he thought that the remedy which was now proposed must be adopted. But he could not help saying a few words upon this matter, because it appeared to him to be of vast importance. The honourable Gentleman said that the manufacturers and bankers in the country were well known in the

neighbourhood in which they live, and therefore there could be no inconvenience in this measure with regard to the payment of the notes as they became due; but he thought the case was otherwise with regard to the capital, and therefore London, Westminster, and Southwark were to be omitted in the Bills, according to the honourable Gentleman's intention at present. That there might be great difficulty and inconvenience he had no doubt, for, most unhappily for this country, there must be great difficulty and inconvenience in the whole progress, and in every branch of this subject. But he did not know how it was possible to go on without making some provision in this respect for the capital as well as for the country; and here he hardly knew what to say; he was confounded when he looked at the probable consequences to which the measure which gave birth to these applications might lead. He knew not what provision was made, or could be made, for the payment of workmen, manufacturers, tradesmen, or others, even for next Saturday night. He was sure, that if any measure was to be adopted upon the subject, not a moment was to be lost. If a poor man was to be paid by a guinea note instead of a guinea, and no man would give him change for it without a discount of seven shillings, to what dreadful consequences might not this lead? What would a poor man do with his fourteen shillings instead of his guinea? What would the still poorer man do, whose weekly wages amounted to no more than fourteen shillings? and he believed the average price of weekly labour was not higher. Indeed, he apprehended that most dreadful consequences would soon ensue from these things, nor did he know how the evil was to be averted. He mentioned these things, that every man in the House should instantly turn his thoughts to the subject. It would be dreadful, indeed, if these notes, instead of money, should become *assignats*, and he feared it would be so.

Mr. *Jeliffe* also apprehended great danger upon this subject.

Mr. *Wilberforce* expressed a hope that, as this was a matter of experiment, it would not be of ill consequence. He hoped it would not be necessary to continue it long. For his own part, he thought that the temporary suspension of the statutes in question would be attended with beneficial effects. In the issuing of small bank notes he thought there was great danger of forgery, but in the issuing of notes proposed by this measure, there would be no danger, because of their very quick return.

The *Solicitor General* gave an history of the two acts which were now proposed to be suspended, and thought, although the

the policy of these acts had been approved of for twenty years, and consequently some might think it imprudent to suspend that policy, yet he apprehended that, under all the circumstances this measure might be safely adopted.

Mr. *Vanstuart* approved of the policy of these acts of Parliament, and wished that the experiment of the notes might be tried before the acts were suspended.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he was inclined to think that the suspension of these acts should be tried for a limited time, but was by no means clear that the suspension ought to be confined to the class or places which were specified in the motion. He thought the effects of the suspension might be beneficial to London, Westminster, and Southwark. He should therefore wish that the leave to bring in the Bill should be larger than the motion asked. The Bill afterwards might be modified, as circumstances should require, and therefore he moved, as an amendment, "That the exception should be left out."

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* readily assented to the amendment.

Mr. *Fox* said, he had no objection to the amendment. He thought that the order for bringing in the Bill should be as wide as possible, in order that afterwards the provisions of it might be regulated as it should appear to be necessary. But he could not help observing, that in contemplating the evil which was now only beginning to be felt, it was impossible to foresee to what inconveniences and distresses it might lead, or to what measures Parliament might be driven. He foresaw, however, great inconveniences in issuing these Bills, particularly in the metropolis, where the multiplicity of business was so great; he feared there would be much confusion in consequence of this. He deplored the ignorance of the lower classes of working people. He felt how difficult it was to make them understand any provision of such an act of Parliament as this. He lamented that such a mass of people should be unable to read the accounts of the debates of the House. He feared that great advantages would be taken of the ignorance of this multitude of persons, and great fraud and mischief would ensue. He said this rather to call on gentlemen to try whether any other and better remedy could not be found than that which was now proposed, and it was with the view of something else being done that he agreed to the amendment, because it made the leave of the House larger as to what might be hereafter proposed.

The motion was then put in the following form. "That
leave

leave be given to bring in a Bill to suspend, for a time to be limited, the operation of the said acts."—Granted.

Mr. *Coke* (of Norfolk) said, he could not sit in that House and observe that such a motion as this was made, without alluding to the conduct of Ministers. He thought it criminal in Ministers to neglect giving to all manufacturing towns proper notice of the necessity which had given rise to the measures which the Parliament was now pursuing. He felt, as he thought every honest man should feel, upon the conduct of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He indeed had found no reason to approve of any part of his general political conduct since the year 1784, nor of those who had lately leagued with him, but who were formerly among the warmest of his opponents. That however was foreign to the matter which was now before the House, and therefore he would not pursue it. He complained now of the criminal negligence of the Minister, the mischief of which was incalculable. He could not help observing to the House, because he knew and felt for the situation of Norwich. A proclamation, with which we were all now too well acquainted, came out on Monday morning at ten o'clock, by which all the gold in the Bank was stopt. He wished to know how the manufacturers and bankers of Norwich were to provide on Saturday night for the payment of all these sums which have always hitherto been paid in cash. It was stated, and he hoped truly, that this distress would be of short duration, for he could have no wishes that they had not for their object the prosperity of this country; but wishes were of no avail against calamity. He desired to know where and how the bankers and manufacturers of that great city were to have a guinea to pay those demands that had always hitherto been paid in cash? What he complained of was, that the Minister did not communicate to Norwich his intention of bringing forward the measure which was now in Parliament. The evils to which that town was exposed, as well as he would dare say many others, but of this he knew, were such as to lead to mischief, the extent of which no human being could foresee, but which every good man must apprehend with sorrow.

Mr. *William Smith* said, that every word that had yet been uttered upon this subject shewed the propriety of a full investigation into the causes of the calamity, which not only threatened this country, but which it now began to feel. He rose at present to allude to a point which had just been mentioned,

tioned. He held in his hand a letter from the Bank at Bath, by which it appeared that they had come to a resolution to suspend payment in specie until Parliament shall have made provision upon the matter. But the letter further stated, that they would be utterly incapable of adhering to that resolution; for it stated that, if they do not part with specie on Saturday next, the labourers cannot be paid. The conclusion of the sentence in the letter was in these words—"But, my good friend, we must part with our specie, or the labourers cannot be paid; they will not take paper." In what manner, he would ask, could they be paid? The letter was not an angry one; it was written with good sense, and as good temper as any letter could be written under such circumstances; but it appeared plainly by that letter, that they must part with their specie, or throw the country around them into the utmost confusion. What measure was to be taken he did not know. He mentioned this for the information of the House. The same evil that existed at Bath, he was persuaded, existed at Norwich, as well as at many other places. This matter called for the best consideration which the House could give it, and could never be provided for before a strict enquiry should be had upon the causes which have led to this alarming evil. He understood that it was for the very purpose of being able to pay the colliers and manufacturers in specie that the Newcastle Bank stopped. The measure which was now before the House would prevent even that. The consequence of all this he was afraid to think of.

BANK NOTES FOR SMALL SUMS.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day upon the bill to suspend the law for preventing the Bank issuing notes under 5l. which was, that it be read a second time.

Mr. *Grey* observed, that these bills under 5l. were to be payable to the bearer on demand.

Mr. *Speaker* observed that these words were not in the *breviate*.

Mr. *Grey* said that the bills were to be payable to bearer on demand. He wished to know how a contradiction that would appear in the proceedings of the House was to be reconciled: for by the bill now before the House these notes were to be payable on demand; whereas the other regulation called upon the Bank not pay in specie whatever until Parliament shall make further provision.

The

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was natural to put into the notes the same words as were customarily used—but the measure that was to follow would attach on these as well as on any other Bank notes.

Mr. *Fox* requested gentlemen would only consider, how they were adding every circumstance that could tend to make the dangers and difficulties under which the country laboured, more complex and insurmountable. An order, said he, issues from council, not legally binding on the Bank, to issue paper instead of cash. In the interim Parliament is about to give the sanction of its authority to the Bank, to issue bills payable on demand; and this before the Bill for confirming the Order of Council could be passed. The individual thinks he has the faith of the Bank, and gets the bill; the Bank refuses to pay in specie; he brings his action, and he must necessarily succeed at law, unless the Parliament makes a retrospective act to cover the Bank. He doubted which was worse, this or the consequences that might arise from a want of the measure. He therefore wished some other mode could be adopted.

Mr. *Bragge* contended, that the objections which had been made were not substantial, but founded on a mere minute critical form of words. When the bills were issued, payable on demand, they were issued with ample knowledge on the part of the holder, that the payment was not to be made in cash—who would take them, not because they were instantly convertible into cash, but because he had confidence in the person that passed it, that he would pay it—at the same time that payment must not be in cash, but in renewal of the bill. It was, in fact, a kind of confidential medium. Parliament, by this Bill, did not force, but enable the Bank to deliver those bills, so that it could not even, in strict form of words, be said, to contradict the other measure. It could not be considered a deception: for the country knew what the Parliament meant.

Mr. *Fox* would not agree that it was at all minute criticism to point out to Parliament, that they were about to pass two acts, the enforcing of one of which must necessarily constitute a breach of the other. It was, he insisted, an actual deliberate breach of faith in Parliament.

Mr. *Bragge* explained.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the House should understand on what principles it gave its consent to this measure. If these Bank notes contained the words “payable on demand;” and if the Bank at the same time was to be prohibited from paying, there must be a law to enforce such prohibition; so that in that case there would be two laws, one of which was to be
passed

passed for the purpose of prohibiting the execution of the other. The proper remedy should be, that these bills were not to be payable till the expiration of a certain time. In that case they would bear a discount, which would be a measure preferable to that of the Bank giving a pledge to the public which it must break through.

The *Solicitor General* said, that labourers or manufacturers would not be compelled to take notes in payment. Those who should take notes, must take them with a knowledge of all the circumstances attending them; therefore no breach of faith could take place in regard to those persons so receiving them. But if those notes were to be modified in the manner recommended by the honourable Gentleman, they would no longer be on a par with other Bank notes. It was better then to issue them in the manner and form in which notes had usually been issued, than in any new form, which might be productive of great inconvenience.

After a few words from *Mr. Elford* the House resolved itself into a Committee: the operation of the Bill to commence from the 2d of March, 1797.

After which the Bill was read a second time, and committed.

The Bill was afterwards gone through, and reported.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then suggested to the House, whether it would not be desirable to wait till the next day, with a view to receive any further instructions, or whether they should that night proceed to the third reading of the Bill for the sake of dispatch.

Mr. Tierney proposed a question, whether, if he should go to a shop to buy goods to the amount of five shillings, and offer one of these twenty shilling notes, he should be put in such a situation as to receive the goods and fifteen shillings in change? On the answer the right honourable Gentleman should make to this question would depend whether he should be induced to take the notes. If the notes were not placed on this footing, and some substantial fund provided for the purpose, they could only tend to produce disputes between him and his tradesmen, and afford an opportunity for a most pernicious species of jobbing and speculation.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it was his wish to give the utmost facility to these measures, which had been taken from the pressure of unavoidable necessity. But it would be recollected that the only point in debate had arisen from the circumstance, that these notes would fall under the same prohibition with respect to the issue of specie, which at present

applied to notes already in circulation. Whether it might be expedient to admit any qualifications to this prohibition in particular cases would be matter of future discussion. In the mean time, all the notes would rest on the same footing—the strong conviction entertained of the validity of the body by whom they were issued.

Mr. *Terny* thanked the Minister for his information that he should not be able to get twenty shillings for a twenty shilling note.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* begged that the information might rest upon the terms of his own explanation, and not upon any comment of the honourable Gentleman.

Mr. *Fox* said, that he would not oppose this Bill, but reserve to himself, whether he would afterwards give his vote for repealing or confirming the Order of Council, prohibiting the Bank to issue specie. His honourable friend asked, where he should get change for his twenty shilling note? He had no hesitation to answer, at the Bank, otherwise the Directors were liable to an action for the amount. But he should at present wave this discussion, as he did not conceive that the question belonged to the present stage of the business.

ORDER OF COUNCIL.

The order of the day being read for a “Motion for Enquiry into the causes of the Order of Council prohibiting the Bank to issue specie;”

Mr. *Fox* said, in rising to make a motion for Enquiry, in pursuance of a notice I gave last night, I do assure the House, that any person who thinks me disposed to indulge in petty cavils, or to enter into minute and verbal criticisms, is very ignorant of the state of my mind on the present occasion. I feel that the present crisis is the most important that ever occurred in the history of this country; and, I solemnly declare, that my opinion with respect to the chance of the future prosperity of this island is more changed within these forty-eight hours than I could possibly have conceived at any former period. If there is any man, who at this moment is disposed to indulge in petty cavils, or enter into verbal criticisms on the state of affairs, he must feel but little regard for the welfare of the country, or must feel less seriously than I do, with respect to the situation of calamity into which we have fallen. So strong is the impression on my mind, that I, on the contrary, am apprehensive lest I should be tedious to the House, from the serious tone I feel myself compelled to assume, and my anxiety to impress upon those who hear me the magnitude of the crisis, and the importance of the duty they are called to discharge

discharge to the country. The principal object of debate hitherto has been, how far we ought to enter into an enquiry respecting the circumstances which refer to this new situation of affairs? A motion for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry has been made and adopted. To this motion I only objected, that it did not make provision that the powers of this Committee should be sufficiently widely extended to meet all those objects of enquiry which the necessity of the time suggested. I shall very likely again be told, that I am getting into verbal criticisms. But this is not a moment at which I should feel myself justified to decline any duty in order to avoid any petty objections. The object of the Committee, which has been moved for, besides enquiring into the state of the Bank, which I put out of the question, is to examine into the necessity of confirming and continuing the Order of Council. I conceive the duty assigned to this Committee to be far too narrow; they are not empowered to enquire into the causes which produced the necessity, nor even into the actual existence of the necessity, on which the Order of Council is said to have been founded; but only into the necessity of confirming and continuing that Order. Now there may be some who are of opinion that no previous necessity existed to justify the publication of that Order. But, after the Order has been once issued, however rashly or improvidently, it may have become matter of absolute necessity to continue and confirm it. In consequence of the measure adopted by Council, the situation of things may now be such, that, even before we examine into the necessity that produced the Order, it may be dangerous to suspend its operation. There were many Gentlemen who were last night of opinion, that the consideration of the existing necessity was so entirely separate from the investigation of the causes that had produced it, and of so much greater urgency, that it ought to be allowed the preference with respect to priority of discussion. I can by no means agree that these are two objects of consideration entirely separate; but it was not attempted to be denied by any Gentleman, that it was the duty of this House to enquire into the causes that produced the necessity. On the contrary, it was generally felt to be an indispensable duty to undertake this enquiry, and it is only necessary for me to refer to the unanimous resolution passed for this purpose; but though there are none who deny the propriety of investigation, there are some who possibly may object to the fitness of the time at which it is attempted to be brought forward. The more I have turned my mind to consider the point, the more firmly am I convinced that an enquiry, such as I now propose, cannot be delayed without danger.

danger. If it be the opinion of the Committee, that the Order of Council should be confirmed and continued, and the necessity for this resolution has arisen merely from the fact that such an Order has been issued, then might we hope that this unprecedented situation of calamity might be of shorter continuance; but if the Order of Council was called for by the exigence of the day, if it has indeed arisen from the pressure of strong and irresistible circumstances, so long as we remain ignorant of the causes which have led to this dreadful situation, we can only apply temporary palliatives for the evil, and by no means adopt any proper or efficient remedy for the embarrassed state of the country. If it has arisen from the improvidence of financial arrangements, and from an enormous and unprincipled system of public expenditure, then the remedy is certain; but if, on the other hand, what I most sincerely deprecate, (for it is better that individuals should be guilty, than that the country should be ruined) it has indeed arisen from a real state of financial and commercial embarrassment, which from unavoidable causes has been progressively going on, and has now arrived at that desperate pitch, that the measure adopted by the Council could no longer be deferred, then, though the prospect be melancholy for the country, individuals must be acquitted from any share of criminality. In this latter case, it will be incumbent upon the country to consider the whole state of its policy, to review the system which has been pursued for many years, and to adopt a very different system for its future proceedings. It will then be necessary that the whole conduct of this House, and the whole principle of legislation, should assume a different form. If this unexampled distress has proceeded from neglect or abuse, from the carelessness of those who should have guarded against encroachment, and the criminality of those at the head of affairs, we must then, for a remedy, recur to our former principles, and endeavour to restore the vigilant policy and the pure administration of former periods; but if this calamity arise from the magnitude of the national debt, and from the rapid degree in which it has increased above the means of the country, we must then adopt a principle of conduct accommodated to this new situation of our affairs. These are questions that do not admit of delay; they call for immediate and serious discussion; such is my conviction of the importance of the crisis, that I am persuaded that by the measures that shall be adopted within these three weeks, the fate of the country must be decided. In one case it will only be necessary to reform those abuses which have been suffered to creep in by neglect, till they have produced

produced this enormous degree of mischief. In the other it will be necessary to resort to a new system, and to make provision for an evil of such magnitude, as it is scarcely possible to contemplate with equanimity. In either case it is important to institute an immediate enquiry, in order that we may be qualified to our situation, and adopt measures suitable to the crisis.

It is now my intention to move for a Committee of Enquiry for the purposes I have mentioned. Probably a Committee of the whole House will not in this instance be deemed eligible. In my opinion, indeed, the more public the enquiry, the better will it answer the object for which it is intended. There are, perhaps, some circumstances connected with the investigation, which might not be deemed proper to be generally divulged, I do not, however, mean to propose that the Committee should be chosen by ballot, but that the members who shall be appointed to compose it be named in this House. There are certainly several instances of Committees having been chosen nominally on similar occasions.—But, in the present instance, I do not rest on the authority of a few precedents, but on a circumstance, which appears to me to carry some weight with a view to the investigation I have now proposed. An opinion has certainly gone abroad in the country that a great majority of the House of Commons repose an unlimited confidence in the present Ministers. I do not say that such a suspicion is well founded, but it is undoubtedly generally prevalent. If such be the surmise that a great majority of this House have so strong a partiality for Ministers, and shew an uniform disposition to delegate to them their duties and their consciences, in order to counteract this suspicion, it is better that the members of this Committee should be openly named in the House, than appointed by the influence of a ballot. If it be thought necessary, let it be debated whether the members who are named are proper persons to sit on the Committee. A point of this sort has been debated in a former instance, and has even occasioned a division. If it be the opinion of Ministers that their friends only should be members of the Committee, let them express that opinion by vote, and not regulate the appointment by the influence of ballot. We shall then be able to judge from the proceedings in this House, and according to the names that we shall find to be adopted or rejected, what expectation we may form from the decision of the Committee. Mr. Fox then moved, “That a Com-
mittee

mittee be appointed to enquire into the causes which have produced the Order of Council."

General Walpole rose to second the motion. He said, the best way in his opinion to restore public credit was to give confidence to the people, which could only be by a removal of those Ministers whose ruinous and ill concerted schemes had been the cause of the present embarrassments. The Order of Council was said to have been issued upon the exigencies created by an extravagant and ill-founded alarm. It was of importance to enquire, then, who were the authors of this alarm, and this would require but little research to ascertain; for who did not know that it had been created by Ministers themselves? He recollected, though he was not present at the debate, that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to the House demanding additional aid to the Emperor, he stated that he had positive information that the enemy meditated an invasion of some part of his Majesty's dominions. What was still more strange, this proclamation, issued upon an occasion to which alarm had given rise, was signed by the greatest alarmists in the kingdom, the Lord Chancellor, the Secretary of State, the first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Fitzwilliam—No, he asked his pardon, Lord Fitzwilliam alone had acted consistently with his principles. Neither did he see the name of his right honourable friend, the Secretary at war, and he believed that he had kept back because he was ashamed of its contents. He hoped that this was but a prelude to his right honourable friend again coming over to that side of the House, which, when he did, he should set as high a value upon his political, as he now did upon his private friendship. There was one argument for the Committee proposed by Mr. Fox which appeared to him to be unanswerable, it was that in the transaction there were too parties, the Bank and Administration. It was agreed on all hands that no blame attached to the Bank; it followed of course, therefore, that it must lie with the Ministers. Upon this ground, as well as upon those which had been so ably stated by Mr. Fox, he seconded the motion for a Committee.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that in the view he meant to take of the subject, he did not find it necessary to advert much to the topics which had been touched upon by the hon. and gallant officer who spoke last, because he did not consider them as immediately relevant to the present state of the question. One of his arguments he had founded upon
the

the Order in Council, and with an air of seriousness and surprise, he affects to wonder at its having been signed by those who had professed alarm. He knew that the name of alarmist was given to a certain class of persons as a title of ridicule, and the hon. Gentleman in his speech seemed to reason upon that interpretation of the term. He did not apprehend, however, that there was any inconsistency in persons professing alarm on just and proper grounds, and their endeavouring to repress it in others, when it was carried to an extravagant and dangerous length. The hon. General said that he recollected what was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a debate upon a question of granting pecuniary aid to the Emperor. The hon. General was aware of the informality of appealing to what was said on a former debate, and therefore he saved the forms of the House, by recollecting what was said when he was not present. The fact was, that he had said that his Majesty's Ministers were in possession of such information as led them to conclude the enemy meditated an invasion of some part of his Majesty's dominions, and in consequence of this information, Government had been active in making preparations for the defence of the kingdom. If these preparations which were making in quarters where danger was most to be apprehended, excited a false and foolish alarm in parts of the country which no danger threatened, it became the duty of Government to take some measures to counteract the consequences which were likely to result from the alarm, nor did he see any inconsistency in those who sounded alarm in the one case repressing it in the other. So much for the arguments of the honourable General. With regard to the question immediately before the House, so far as he had been able to collect the sentiments of Gentlemen from the debate of the preceding night, there seemed to be a greater difference of opinion respecting the causes which gave rise to the difficulties, than about the duty of instituting an enquiry into these causes. Accordingly the House had the preceding night resolved to enter into that enquiry; a resolution which he too much respected to oppose its being carried into effect. He disclaimed all idea of the power of the Committee which had just been balloted for to enquire into the necessity of the measure and the expediency of continuing it, to be so narrow and limited as to preclude them from instituting an enquiry into the existence of the necessity. This enquiry naturally preceded the other, viz. the necessity of providing for the continuance of the remedy which had been applied; but

but the next point was the causes in which the necessity originated. It was last night declared to be the sense of the House that these causes should be enquired into by a Committee, and now the hon. Gentleman moved that both enquiries should go on at the same time in separate Committees. He had no hesitation in delivering it as his opinion, that both enquiries should be gone through successively by the same Committee. For what advantage could be gained from a different mode of proceeding? Could any advantage be gained in point of time? Both enquiries were to proceed upon the same documents. The same papers would be required, and the same persons summoned for examination. But how could these papers be produced, and these persons attend before both the Committees at the same time? It was impossible, and if no time could be gained by it, what objections could there be to referring both enquiries to the same Committee, a Committee to whom no objections could be started, since their names were not yet known (a loud cry of *hear! hear!* from the opposite side of the House), at least whose names were not yet before the House. But it was argued by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) that the Committee ought to be publicly appointed, and the different names who were to compose it submitted to discussion. He really found it difficult to speak upon this part of the subject consistently with the orders of the House. In his opinion, to discuss the names of a Committee, who necessarily must differ in their political sentiments, and who were to be appointed to try a political question, it would be much more decent and becoming the dignity of the House to avoid. In any discussion of that sort, it was not only improper but unparliamentary to discuss whether Gentlemen were attached to one side of the House or the other. If a number of Gentlemen conscientiously and from a regard to duty, were in the habits of acting with Ministers, and if a number of other Gentlemen, he was bound to say in candour, conscientiously and systematically opposed the measures of Ministers contrary to the opinion of a majority of the House, no person was entitled to say who was right and who was wrong. All he contended for was, that there was no reason why a minority, who oppose the Government, should have more weight in a Committee than the majority who support the Government. It was presumptuous in any minority to pretend exclusively to integrity, and it would be absurd in the country to distrust the majority merely because they acted with Ministers. Though he had no objection to an enquiry, there-
fore

fore he would not consent to any Committee, but one appointed by ballot. Any other mode of enquiry would be by referees and arbitrators, rather than by a Committee of the House of Commons fairly and regularly chosen. The enquiry might either proceed upon a resolution of the House immediately passed for that purpose, or an ulterior instruction might be given to the Committee after they had gone through the first enquiry. At all events, he should oppose the motion for a separate Committee.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, he was never more surprised than by the conduct of the right hon. Gentleman opposite, that evening, and he requested every Gentleman to bear witness—as an argument against his right hon. Friend, he had been persuading him to adopt that very measure, which he (Mr. *Sheridan*) had last night recommended, and which the Minister then vehemently opposed, as productive of endless enquiry, and unnecessary and dangerous delay. (*A violent cry of hear! hear! hear!*) He was sure from the manner in which this simple observation was received by the House, that they felt the full force of the Minister's tergiversation, and that they were convinced he had now precisely recommended the very measure he so lately disapproved. (The cry of hear, hear, was loudly repeated, and an hon. Member was called to order for applauding with his hands.)

The *Speaker* informed the House, that he had not been inattentive to the irregularity and indecency of conduct in the right honourable Member, and should have certainly felt it a point of duty to have called him to order, if he had not been anticipated. He now, however, begged leave to acquaint the House, that the call to order was perfectly right, and that such conduct could not consistently with the rules and orders of the House, be repeated without incurring its censure.

Mr. *Sheridan* proceeded. He admitted that such behaviour was wholly indefensible and unjustifiable, but thought it was not very surprising that some Gentlemen should be a little forgetful of form on such a wonderful occasion. To return, however, to the observations he was about to make, he remarked, that the right hon. Gentleman had expressed himself on behalf of the dignity of the House with a tone and warmth of temper in which he unfortunately found he had not the ability to retort. [*Mr. Sheridan laboured under the effects of a severe cold and hoarseness.*] It was well, however, that the right hon. Gentleman did make use of that

tone and warmth of temper to give strength to his arguments; for there was something so barren in the matter as rendered it absolutely necessary. The right hon. Gentleman had observed that he had a number of precedents in his favour, for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry by ballot, and that such a mode of appointment had been introduced by our ancestors as the most equitable and impartial. That was indisputable, he confessed; but he wished the House to decide, whether a number of good rules and precedents was not abused, and made a vehicle of fraud and imposture. The right hon. gentleman treated the proposition of naming a Committee as preposterous at this time, but if the right hon. Gentleman would be pleased to recollect, there was a time when, in consequence of the unfortunate situation of affairs (alluding to the time of introducing the Regency bill), the right hon. Gentleman himself proposed a Committee of Enquiry by nomination, for which he proposed that one member should be named by himself, and another member by another person on the opposite side of the House, alternately, until the whole Committee should be nominated, and in consequence of a difference of opinion upon that mode of proceeding, a division took place, which, to the best of his recollection, was either 76 or 98 in support of it. Why then did he adopt this mode of appointment at that time and refuse it now? The reason for the change was nice in the extreme, because it was convenient to prejudice and party feeling. The appointment of a Committee by ballot had grown into disrepute, on account of the known fact, that the Minister named all the members, and the notoriety of this juggle at that awful crisis, rendered it expedient to accommodate the appearance of affairs to public prejudice. On a great question of revenue, when a Committee by ballot was appointed, he (Mr. Sheridan) produced a list of names influenced by Government, and it afterwards appeared that the 15 names which he produced were actually chosen. After such a notorious demonstration of collusion, he submitted to the House whether any person there, or out of doors, could for a moment believe the appointment of a Committee by ballot equitable and impartial? But the right hon. Gentleman had said that the names of the Committee now appointed were not yet known, and therefore no person could yet say how far a trust ought or ought not to be reposed. Was the right hon. Gentleman sure their names were not known? What would he say now if the name of every

every person should be read before the report was made? So notorious was the fact, that Government had previously chosen every member, that Treasury lists had been shewn in the lobby, and people had turned away with disgust from the proceedings. If the practice were such, the publicity of it ought to induce the House not only to "reform it altogether," but adopt some other mode of proceeding, which might at least assume the colour of impartiality. He did not wish to treat this subject with any false or exaggerated statements, and if he mentioned it slightly, he should deserve blame. He should, therefore, proceed immediately to support what he had stated, by reading the list of names appointed for this Committee by the ballot, and if the report should eventually shew, that all or the greater part of the persons thereby named, were actually appointed, he hoped the House would give him some credit for asserting the necessity of another mode. The names he was ready to allow, were very respectable, because the Treasury influence which dictated them, made it a part of its finesse to have a packed jury somewhat creditable, lest the abuse should be too glaring, and fail in its deception.

Mr. Sheridan then read the names on his list as follows :

Sir John Scott—a very respectable name.

Isaac Hawkins Browne, Esq.—a very proper person.

Charles Bragge, Esq.—He will entertain the Committee with critical remarks.

John William Anderson, Esq.

John Fane, Esq.

Thomas Grenville, Esq.

William Wilberforce, Esq.

Charles Grey, Esq.—very proper indeed.

Sir John Mitford.

William Hussey, Esq.

William Wilberforce Bird, Esq.

William Plumer, Esq.

Thomas Powis, Esq.

John Blackburne, Esq.

Thomas Berney Bramston, Esq.

All very respectable Gentlemen!

He must observe, however, that in this list Ministers had not preserved the rules of proportion, for his side of the House were entitled to have five and a fraction. He did not charge the Chancellor of the Exchequer with making out the list himself. Mr. Sheridan said, I see the honourable Gentleman opposite (Mr. Dundas) smile, as if he

would say, "No, my honourable friend, in the innocence of his heart, never suspected such a thing, but there are plenty around perfectly competent to the task." With respect to the question itself, he was perfectly indifferent whether an enquiry was instituted or not, if another Committee was not appointed. An honourable General had endeavoured to account for the Secretary at War not signing the Order of Council; he believed that it proceeded from the reflections it contained against the alarmists, for he was so rooted an alarmist himself, that he was sure he could not believe that any of his tribe could act in a manner worthy of reprehension. He begged pardon of the House for being jocular on so grave a subject, but even amidst the wreck of public credit, and on the brink of the country's ruin, it was impossible not to laugh at the juggling tricks and miserable shifts to which Ministers had recourse to screen themselves from punishment.

The *Secretary at War* said, that upon the present occasion the honourable Gentleman, who had just sat down, had resorted to that expedient which it was the custom on all questions to introduce, that artifice which he so frequently displayed in order to disparage and to degrade the House, he now attempted to employ. The object he had in view, however, was too obvious to escape detection. He eagerly seized upon practices, which, in reality, required no disguise, because they contained nothing improper; he assumed that corruption was the motive which must produce every measure; he took the guilt for granted, and then sought the matter of fact, in order to prove that the House was corrupt, and to reduce Parliament in the estimation of the public. He thinks he has proved his case when he has shown that the men who are to form the Committee are influenced by the opinions of those with whom they have been accustomed to act. Such representations as these, however, could not pass with any man of understanding. What foppery was it to adduce this as a charge of corruption, when it was so well known that the same thing prevailed upon the other side. Why were not the opinions of those whose conduct they generally approved to have the same weight with members upon one side of the House as well as upon the other? The cant of superior purity, and the charge of corruption, was the manner in which the minority had commonly thought proper to revenge themselves on the majority. This was the cant by which they endeavoured to impose upon the public. The same charge might be imputed to those
who

who composed the minority, because they were guided by the direction of the right honourable Gentleman opposite (Mr. Fox), a circumstance which he did not state as a reproach. Must then the smaller number arrogate to themselves the most perfect rectitude, and charge the majority with the very worst intentions? Surely this was a pretty modest pretension. In fact the charge of corruption against such a body as the House of Commons was in itself absurd and ridiculous. The number who could be supposed to act merely from their interest must be very few. Does the House of Commons differ from the country at large in this respect. In places where influence could be less felt the same character prevailed. Yet, take the majority of any extensive society in different parts, take them in the city of London, and the same charge might be brought against their purity. It had sometimes been used as an argument to prove the corruption of the House, that members who were monied men became subscribers to public loans, doing that which no law prohibited, and what, though they had not been members of the House they would have done. By such representations as these was the character of Parliament vilified, and its independence arraigned. With regard to what had fallen from his honourable friend (Colonel Walpole) he could not reply, as he could not, like his honourable friend, so readily overcome the difficulty of answering what he had not heard. Various reasons were assigned for his name not appearing to the Order of Council, to which it would not be expected that he should reply. Because he had once seen danger, was he always to be afraid; and because he had once been, upon good grounds, alarmed, was he to feel alarm upon every occasion, however exaggerated it might be? It was said that one side of the House had now come into the measures of the other, but as their proposals the preceding night were so inconsistent and so opposite, it was almost impossible that in shunning one they should not fall into another.

Mr. Grey said his honourable friend had been accused by the Secretary at War of vilifying the House of Commons, and degrading it in the public estimation. He wished, however, that the right honourable Gentleman, when he professed himself so anxious, for the dignity and reputation of the House of Commons would attend to the qualities which were calculated to render it respectable, and to justify its claim to veneration. The right honourable Gentleman held it to be useful that the mode of ballot should be so conducted as to be formed by ministerial influence. He conceived it

to

to be no disgrace to receive instruction from Administration with regard to the names to be given in the lists. In a situation of public affairs like the present, amidst the unfortunate events with which we were surrounded, and considering the measures of Ministers to which they were to be ascribed, when we viewed the unparalleled distress into which this country was plunged, Ministers, upon the face of things, were charged with blame, and if the investigation of so serious a point was to be entrusted to a Committee, formed in such a manner, it was not only by the charge of his honourable friend but by their own conduct, that the House would be degraded. But it was said that this was the common cant of minorities, and that Opposition themselves would act in the same manner were they placed in the same situation.

If upon the side of the House on which he stood, they were desirous to have influence with those who thought favourably of their principles, they would do it not by stealth but openly. If influenced, the public would then see how the Committee was instituted, and might judge of its character. They complained not that influence would produce its weight, though in circumstances so momentous as the present, it was to be lamented that it existed; but they complained that the House of Commons should display such readiness to confide. Indeed it was most surprising that amid the difficulties which his misconduct had occasioned, the Minister could even venture to come forward and ask for confidence; but it was more melancholy that Parliament should accede to the demand. What was worst too in this mode of forming the Committee, was, that it pretended to be fair, while it could only have the effect to delude. The farce of a ballot ought at least to be laid aside, that the public might be able to judge from the openness of the proceedings of the purity they should have to expect. It was indeed not a little singular for the right honourable Secretary at War to object so contemptuously that it was the common cant of minorities to charge the majority with corruption. He would tell the right honourable Gentleman, however, what proved the cry to be false and deceitful. When those who are most loud against abuses, and most forward to arraign corruptions, became their abettors and defenders. When the right honourable Gentleman, who had opposed so strenuously the measures of the present Minister, who had spurned his "dirty filth and dowlafs," contracted an intimate alliance with him, supported and extended his corrup-
tions

tions, then he would dispute the sincerity of those who used the language, and pursued the conduct which the right honourable Gentleman had stigmatised. Such arts might be employed to mislead the people, but what could be thought of the virtue of the man who endeavoured to destroy all confidence in professions by a general charge against those who ventured to expose corruption? With regard to himself he would say, and he wished his words to be remembered, should he ever attempt to deviate from his principles, that with the present Government he would hold no communion, and if he thought his honourable friend (Mr. Fox) in office capable of maintaining the abuses at present prevailing, he would lose his support. There was no salvation for the country but a complete investigation of the causes by which we were reduced to our present situation. There could be no renovation of public credit without a removal of the causes which had effected its destruction. To accomplish these objects, the most exact œconomy and the most extensive retrenchments were required. The influence of the Crown must be diminished; places which were not essential to the purposes of Government must be abolished; and above all, and without which, nothing could be effectual, a reform in the representation must be introduced. He knew the use which would be made of this declaration, but he was not afraid to utter his sentiments, nor was he concerned for the consequences which might be drawn from his candour. Till he had by his own deed forfeited his claim to confidence by a dereliction of his principles, he was entitled to the credit of sincerity.

It was said by the right honourable gentleman, was it not natural that those who had systematically supported the measures of Administration, and given them confidence, should feel the influence which this circumstance would produce?—He would say, on the contrary, that it was unnatural and monstrous that they should feel this influence in favour of the Minister. If public affairs had continued to move in a course of glory and prosperity, if credit had remained unimpaired, if the Bank of England had not stopped payment, and Government committed an act of bankruptcy, then they might have given without a blush their support to the Minister. But after he had led us from one disaster to another, to the very brink of ruin, could he call for, could he expect our confidence? Ministers stood arraigned as having destroyed the public prosperity. They might obtain an acquittal; but it was right, it was decent, that the tribunal should be so constituted as to give weight to a sentence of acquittal. For this purpose, then, the
ballot

ballot was not the mode of proceeding. The necessity of an enquiry was not denied. The right honourable gentleman, defeated last night by the resolution of the House, had now found that, though the enquiries were separate, they might be referred to the same committee; though last night he had denied equally the connexion between the subjects and the possibility of referring them to one Committee. In his opinion, however, the best way would be to refer the consideration of the first point to one Committee, and the investigation of the causes to another, for there was nothing to prevent them from proceeding at the same time without inconvenience. Upon the measures adopted for the next three weeks, the prosperity, nay the existence of the country, depended. How could they expect to retrieve our situation without investigating the causes of the disorder? The necessity of a speedy and thorough enquiry was then most urgent. His honourable friend justly complained that those who were so eager to propagate alarms should be offended that they were exaggerated. Such had been the system of Ministers every session for some time past, and such extravagant and groundless alarm had been the foundation of some oppressive measures. At the beginning of the present session, the speech from the throne announced the alarm of invasion; Ministers held forth the danger as threatening, and then passed the troublesome and oppressive acts which were intended to put the country in a state of defence. They propagated the alarm with activity, till at length the actual attempt had excited a real alarm and uneasiness. The alarm raised by Ministers had taken an unfortunate direction, and become too serious. While it was only meant to induce the people to throw themselves more implicitly upon the present Administration, it had turned the attention of the people to a consideration of their safety, which produced a distrust of Government. Feeling, therefore, as he did, the importance and the urgency of our present situation, he should vote for a separate Committee to investigate, to their remotest sources, the causes which had produced the act of Council.

Mr. *Wilberforce* rose to vindicate the dignity and consistency of the majority of the House, from the aspersions thrown out against them by gentlemen who were in favour of the motion. They had, indeed, mixed ridicule with declamation to attain their purpose; but he would ask, what force could such aspersions have, coming from gentlemen who had changed from day to day, from month to month, and from year to year? It certainly came with an ill grace from them to charge the House with corruption; they who on all occasions abused the last Parliament, and gave the present one very strong reasons to judge
what

what report it might hereafter receive from them. If Government, as was reported, had actually offered the lists of Members proper to be ballotted for, and gentlemen, in consequence of that measure, either approved of or altered them, was not that proceeding right? He had altered the one presented to himself, and had thus exercised his rights, and followed his duty, not with a slavish acquiescence, but with his own discretion and judgment. Such a charge was peculiarly ill timed, and came very awkwardly from the gentlemen opposite, who had then lists passing between them expressly to the same intent. He did not perfectly agree with both sides on the object of the motion; but he would say that it became the country to enquire what retrenchments and savings might be made; and no person, he was convinced, would rejoice more at such a proceeding than the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The opinion of the public was held out as against the sense of the majority of the House, though the fact was directly opposite. He recollected that such arguments were applied to him in 1783, and 84, in 90, and 96, yet when he returned to his constituents, instead of finding the sentiments of the people against him, the absolute reverse was manifest. In the actual state of the country and of the world, it was impossible not to be exposed to some ills, notwithstanding the utmost wisdom of any Administration. But from the very outset of the war, much of the public calamity was owing to the conduct of Opposition, and to the conduct of those who had proceeded to lengths which the Opposition would not avow.

Mr. *Curwen* said, that if any list whatever had been offered to him, he should have considered it as the grossest insult. It was the object of the ballot that all should exercise their own judgments without influence. He had no confidence in the ability of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) to guide public affairs at this momentous crisis. He had no hopes of energy while he governed. The country could only be saved by a man who had the magnanimity to destroy the whole system of Ministers, and by a Parliament that would receive no lists. He hoped that if his honourable friend, Mr. Fox, came into office, he would not betray the assurances he had given when out of office.

The *Master of the Rolls* was for deferring the Committee now proposed, till the report of the Committee, which was already appointed, had been received: it would be then for the House to consider if the report was satisfactory; or if further powers were to be granted to the same, or to another Committee; but it was absurd that they should both sit at the

same time, and on the same business. It would be equally useless and absurd to appoint a Committee, that was to investigate and review all the measures since they entered into Administration. This only could be the object of the present motion, and as such he should oppose it.

Mr. *Scwell* was for enquiring into the causes immediately operating to produce the necessity of the late Order in Council; but thought we should not now stick at an investigation of the remote ones.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, Mr. *Wilberforce*, and Mr. *Scwell*, severally explained.

Mr. *Pollen* was surprised to see the precious time of the House consumed in discussing the propriety or impropriety of the mode in which the Committee had been appointed. The 15 gentlemen who were to compose it, were men of known integrity, and acknowledged abilities, and what more could be required?

Lord *Hawkebury* justified the consistency of the vote which he had given on the preceeding night, with that which he meant to give on this. He had no objection to an inquiry into the proximate causes, though the degrees of affinity which a cause bore to an effect was not always easily to be ascertained; and if this inquiry was to be pursued, he thought it absurd to appoint two Committees, whose inquiries were to be directed to the same object.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it was not easy to define what were remote, and what proximate causes. This must be referred to the discretion of a Committee.

Mr. *Nicholls* said, he would trouble the House with a single observation. It had been stated by the Secretary at War, that when a Committee was to be elected by ballot, lists, containing the names of persons proper to be returned on that Committee had been usually distributed with the privacy of the Minister; Mr. *Nicholls* said, he did not mean to examine whether that usage was proper or improper. But he desired the Minister to consider the situation in which he stood. He had advised his Majesty to issue an Order of Council, which the Attorney General had, the preceding evening, declared to be illegal. And, indeed, it would have been strange if the Attorney General had not declared it to be illegal; for by that Order of Council his Majesty's Minister had directed the Bank of England, acting as the agent of the nation to pay the dividends to the national creditors, not to pay those dividends which the nation had contracted to pay—He was to justify this measure to the satisfaction of his country. If he was unable

to

to give the country satisfaction on this subject, he could not remain the Minister. He put it to the consideration of the Minister himself, whether the country would be satisfied with an acquittal by a Committee nominated by the Minister himself?

Mr. *Windham* and Mr. *Wilberforce* said each a few words in explanation.

The *Secretary at War* explained. He denied that either he, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had ever said that the Committee was chosen by Treasury lists. He had said that lists were circulated, which was the case on both sides of the House; but gentlemen were at liberty either to adopt or to reject the names inserted in them.

Dr. *Laurence* began by observing, that ever since the Order of Council had been published, he had endeavoured to chastise and discipline his feelings, so as to look at the awful state of the country coolly and dispassionately, but with firmness and resolution. In that temper of mind he had come to the House, and he was happy to acknowledge that the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had introduced his motion was fair, candid, and in no respect discordant with his feelings. Yet he could not avoid saying, that they were considerably affected by the violent declamation used by some Gentleman who followed him, and by the laughter which one hon. Gentleman through the greater part of his speech, had too successfully studied to excite in discussing a topic, which required peculiar delicacy and gravity, at a period so momentous to the public welfare.

The real merits of the question appeared to him to lie in a small compass. The House had last night passed a vote in which he had cordially concurred. It had been unanimously agreed, that it was the duty of the House to enquire into the causes which led to the Order of Council. Now a proposition was made to nominate a new Committee for that enquiry. Ministers resisted the motion, but were willing to consent, that an instruction to the same effect should be given to the Committee, for the appointment of which a ballot had just been taken; submitting at the same time to the House, whether it would be best to give that instruction now, or to wait till the Committee should have gone through all the subjects already intrusted to their investigation. And upon this a charge of inconsistency was brought against Ministers, as if they had thus in effect adopted the amendment negatived last night, which would at once have referred to

the Committee the general enquiry into all the causes of our present situation, and then by a subsequent instruction which the hon. mover had announced his intention of adding, would have restrained the Committee to report first upon the immediate cause, the existing necessity for the issuing of the order. For his part (Dr. Laurence said) without recurring to the speeches by which the amendment was supported, he saw in the two modes of proceeding a plain and marked distinction on the very face of them. In both, it was true, the same subjects would come under the consideration of the Committee in the same order of time; but the importance, which the House would appear to attribute to the immediate cause, the actually existing necessity, would be very different, whether it were kept distinct, or whether it were confused in the multitude of possible causes more or less remote.

The charge of inconsistency, he thought, might be fairly retorted upon those, who having last night wished to appoint one Committee, now wished to have two. But his principal objection was the perplexity which two Committees would occasion. Both would have to enquire into the immediate cause. If both should examine the same witnesses and call for the same documents, they must mutually retard each other's proceedings. If the reports of both should alternately agree in this point, there would have been an unnecessary and inconvenient delay on a subject peculiarly pressing. If there should be any material variation between the two reports, laid together on the table, a third Committee must be chosen to decide between the former two; and the situation of the House would be still worse, if one report having been early made, the House should take any legislative measure upon that, and what they had done, should afterwards be impeached by another report from the second Committee. It would be most expedient therefore to wait till the Committee already appointed, had fully discharged all its present functions, and then to consider in what manner the general enquiry into the causes should be conducted.

As a reason for proceeding to institute a new Committee, the present had been said to be chosen through corrupt influence: and a list had been read, which, it was prophesied, would be found to contain the names of the actual members, when the result of the scrutiny into the ballot should be declared. He did not himself know whether any list had been circulated, really containing those names. But what was
admitted

admitted about the list, was enough to satisfy him. It had been distinctly allowed, that all the names were highly respectable. Now the only argument, which the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had himself urged for preferring an open nomination to a ballot, was the opportunity of objecting to any improper person ; but it was confessed that not only that end had been attained in the present instance, but a positively good Committee had been procured, of men possessing ability, integrity, and every other requisite for the public service. Nor was this all. It was also admitted, that the Committee had a mixture of members from both sides of the House in nearly equal proportion to their comparative numbers on the late divisions. It was a correct representation of the representatives of the British nation ; except indeed a fraction which was said to be in favour of the majority. He aimed some raillery at this minuteness, and concluded this topic by declaring, that he should never be in haste to reform ancient practices which drew after them such beneficial consequences ; he should rather cherish the corruption which produced such purity.

Indeed the open nomination which had been proposed, was no less subject to influence, than a ballot. It mattered little whether one right hon. Gentleman, or the other publicly named a person to the choice of the House, or put his name written on a slip of paper, into the hand of his next neighbour ; they who voted, or they who ballotted, would equally pay regard to the authority of the proposer. But the precedent, to which reference had been made, shewed the real nature of the intended nomination. On that occasion the two right hon. Gentlemen on the opposite sides of the House alternately named a Member. If that practice should once be established, it would not merely vilify and degrade the House, as had been said to be the tendency of some of the declamations, which they had heard that night ; it would wholly annihilate its character of a deliberative assembly ; it would avowedly divide the House into two parties under two adverse chiefs ; it would hold them forth to their constituents and the world, as sitting there to hear causes argued by two eloquent counsel, who might make compromises or references, as their own interests, discretion, or convenience might dictate : a condition to which he trusted that the House would never suffer itself to be reduced.

When the report of the Committee should be on the table, if from their conduct any just objection could be advanced
against

against any or all the members, he should feel himself at liberty to vote for a partial or a total change. He would never (he said) repose a blind confidence ; but he would repose a general confidence ; in particular cases, where the circumstances demanded it he would enquire ; but he would never blindly rush into enquiry. In his opinion there was no more delicate consideration in the practice of our constitution than the precise point where confidence ought to end, and enquiry begin. Upon the wise application of both in proper season depended in our constitution that union of opposite excellencies, which some had thought chimerical, the secrecy, dispatch and consistency of a pure monarchy, with the cumulative impulse, weight and force, as well as the means which publicity affords of checking all abuses in a pure democracy.

He apologized for having so long trespassed on the patience of the House, but begged their permission to advert to one topic more, in which he felt himself peculiarly interested. The name of Earl Fitzwilliam had been mentioned by an hon. and gallant officer. It had been called an illustrious and venerable name, and he agreed in the fullest manner to the panegyric which had been bestowed upon it. But why introduce that name, because it had not been signed to the Order of Council ? He was a consistent alarmist, it had been said, and therefore could not have signed a declaration against the effects of alarm. That noble lord, and many other good and wise men with him some time since had confessed alarm ; but that was an alarm the very reverse of the present ; it was an alarm of precaution, an alarm of preparation, the ally of fortitude, and the enemy of rash and precipitate fear. That noble Lord would certainly have signed the order, if he had been present, and as must be presumed of the Privy Counsellors who did sign it, he had been convinced of the existing necessity. He would have been the more likely to have signed it in proportion as it appeared more vigorous, decisive, adapted to the exigencies of the country, and incurring a manly responsibility ; for he ever had most approved, he ever would most approve whatever was most becoming a man, a gentleman, a nobleman, an Englishman.

Mr. *Courtenay* lamented the acuteness of his learned friend's feelings, as he had imagined that he was not of quite so nervous a frame. The delicacy of his feelings, however, had been disturbed by every thing which had occurred on that side of the House. The state of the country had

had agitated his feelings, the pleasantry of his hon. friend, (Mr. Sheridan) by forcing him to laugh, had thrown him into so violent a tremor, that he had almost lost the power of speech. The learned doctor's feelings seemed to be of the texture of Tilburina, in the Critic, who was in continual alarm lest her feelings should be disturbed. He could not conceive how this uncommon delicacy had been produced, till he began to reflect that the innate modesty of the doctor must have been greatly strengthened and improved in Doctor's Commons in the nice examination of *crim. con.* transactions, and in the elucidations of subjects of divorce and separation *a mensa et thoro*. From this he had conceived a profound esteem for the profession of the civil law, which seemed to confer a delicacy of feeling which the Attorney and Solicitor General would in vain expect from the practice of the common law. Mr. Courtenay was interrupted as he was going on by some expressions of eagerness for the question, upon which he observed, that Pliny, in his natural history, mentions a species of men who have heads like dogs, and who bark instead of speaking. From the noise he had heard he imagined that at the last general election, some of this species had found their way into the House through the lifts for some Treasury boroughs. The learned Gentleman had passed a very handsome eulogium on the character of a nobleman whom he believed it was not unfair to name (Lord Fitzwilliam). He had closed this eulogium with an avowal that he believed Lord Fitzwilliam would have set his name to the Order of Council had he been present. If this was so, it appeared somewhat strange, after the character he had given of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. "A man whom no body ought to trust—who had betrayed all those who had placed the smallest confidence in him." Yet the learned Gentleman was certain, that on the advice of this man the noble Lord, whom he styles his friend, would, with a manly spirit, set down his name to an illegal order issued in consequence thereof, whereby the Bank of England is required to commit an act of bankruptcy, and to defraud all the public creditors who had placed their confidence in its honesty and punctuality. He thought the noble Lord could not be much obliged to the learned Gentleman for the opinion which he had delivered respecting him. The learned Gentleman, after recovering from the injury which his *feelings* had at first sustained, had made an attempt, an ironical allusion, to raise a laugh in the House. In this unfortunately he had completely failed. In a short time afterwards, however, when he
had

had assumed all the gravity and solemnity which the importance of the subject required, and endeavoured to impress the House with the same, he as completely succeeded in raising a laugh. In future, therefore, he would advise him, when he wished to make the House merry, to be proportionably solemn, and to be as sportive as possible when he wanted to impress them with gravity.

Dr. *Laurence* observed, that his feelings arose from the consideration of the present situation of his country, and he had reason to believe that they were of a different nature from those which the hon. Gentleman possessed.

The *Attorney General* felt no disposition to shut out an enquiry into the causes which produced the Order of Council; but he felt also the necessity of an immediate decision on that point, which must ease the public mind. To that alone the Committee should attend, and not to any thing which might cause a delay. With respect to the appointment of a Committee by a ballot, it had been the uniform practice of our ancestors; and the present was not the moment to treat such with disrespect. If his name should be found on the Secret Committee, he would do what he thought his duty should direct him to; at the same time he would declare, that he would rather not be chosen a member of it.

Mr. *Grey* rose to explain. He said, that he would repeat what he had before asserted, that if the country was to be saved, there must be a total change in the system of the Government; and so far was he from recommending any thing like a revolution, that he was convinced such a measure would be the only means of preventing a revolution.

Mr. *Banks* said, that in the present crisis of the country it was very indifferent to him what Committee was appointed to examine the matter that was before the House, so that the question could be properly and truly examined, because he trusted that a Committee of that House, whether nominated in the House or chosen by ballot, would do their duty; and as to the Committee being (a majority of them at least) favourable in politics to the Minister, that appeared to him to be an objection of but little weight; for let the Committee be chosen whatever way it might, it was natural that, as a part, it must have the general complexion of the whole. He made use of the list that was given to him before the ballot upon the Committee, but he made use of his discretion also upon that list. He saw no impropriety in that list being given to him, for there might be many names upon it whom he should have wished to have chosen, but who might not readily occur to him.

him. The only doubt he had on the motion now before the House resolved itself into a question of time. If he was sure that the matter to be investigated by such a Committee as was at present asked for, would not branch out into a length that would defeat the object that was now in view, and in which dispatch was so essential, he should be ready to agree to the appointment of a distinct Committee. But he feared the length of time which the investigation would require would be injurious, perhaps fatal, to the object which he, and he believed almost the whole House, had in view. The question of the solidity of the Bank would lie in a very narrow compass, and it could not be supposed that much time would be required to make a report, and he believed the House would agree with him there was great urgency upon that subject. But with regard to the other question, namely, the causes of the present pressure, the matter was very different; the investigation must necessarily be of an intricate nature, and must take up much time as well as labour. He owned that it was a desirable thing to restore confidence to the people in our public affairs; and he was ready to confess, that, in order to do so, it would be necessary to go into the whole system of our finance. In the management and distribution of that finance there had been great expenditure; much of it he believed was unavoidable; but he should like to see tried what savings could be made in our expenditure; great savings he hoped could and should be made. But in considering the conduct of Administration in that particular, some allowance ought to be made. They did not at first expect the war to have gone to the length it had, and therefore he did not blame them for not having managed the affairs of our finance so well as if they had at first been aware that the war would have so long continued. As the war had gone on to such a length, no person could be surprised at the prodigality with which the contest had been accompanied. Had they really foreseen the length to which the war had been carried, he thought they could not have been screened from severe censure for what had happened; but he did not think so. He was ready to confess that, desirable as the confidence of the public was, he did not think it could ever be restored while the war continued. But although the sums which had been expended upon the war were lavish, yet it was not wonderful the case had been so; for when we had a favourite object in view, we are too apt to neglect the expense of the means by which that object is to be attained. It was the nature of man to set too high a value upon the object of his heart, and too little on the price he pays for obtaining

it. Besides, the sums, though very large that were expended on this object of Ministers, were so often issued, and so rapidly upon each other, that in time their magnitude made less impression as the object was repeatedly exhibited. For these reasons, although we lamented the effect, we ought not to judge too harshly of his Majesty's Ministers. He looked forward to a complete investigation of all the causes which have brought on the present crisis. He looked forward also with an anxious hope to very material and beneficial retrenchments of expence, but he did not think the present was the moment to enter on the investigation of either.

Mr. Fox then rose, and replied to the following effect. At this late hour of the night I feel myself bound to apply to the House for that indulgence which has been so often generously given to me, while I endeavour to answer what has been urged by way of objection to the motion which is now before you. I feel myself called upon at this late hour of the night to make this application, because the turn which the debate has taken has been in many respects extraordinary, and because the manner of treating the question does appear to me disingenuous to the last degree. Indeed the management and dexterity, if management and dexterity it can be called, of this debate, has been of the most extraordinary kind. What was the management of the debate of the preceding night? I proposed that we should enquire into the Order of Council. The answer was, that such a question should not be referred to the Committee then to be appointed, for to it was to be referred another separate and distinct object. It was stated by us, that it might make a part of it, and that the same Committee might investigate both. We were told again, in answer, "You cannot report upon both within a certain period, which is so essential that the first point should be settled." That objection was removed by my suggestion, that the Committee might report first upon that point which was the most pressing, and then proceed upon the other. The House was of opinion, that a Committee of Enquiry into the first object should be appointed; but that if the second was to be entered into, that should be submitted to a separate Committee. What then happened?—There was some difference of opinion respecting the mode of appointing the Committee. A right honourable Gentleman proposed the Committee should be by ballot. I opposed that ballot, but, from the lateness of the hour and the idea I had that another Committee should be chosen for the object I had in view, I did not press the House to come to a division. What then happened? The Minister and those who are connected

ned with him prevail in obtaining all that is necessary to their views. He carries his point; he has obtained the Committee in the mode he wishes. I then move for the Committee, which I think necessary. I am now told that there shall not be a separate enquiry before another Committee. The Minister said, "That if we ballot for a Committee, we should know the purposes for which that Committee is formed, but we should not refer to that Committee the subsequent extensive enquiry." But when that very Committee is elected by ballot, when he has got the very election he wanted, and is sure that a large majority of the members are his friends and intimate political connections, he changes his tone; the doubts as to the event to him are then dispelled, and he says to himself, "I see my judges, the danger is over, I will therefore refer the whole case to these judges. Now that I see and know my judges, let me put the whole of my case before them; they are competent to do justice to the whole case, and therefore there is no necessity of appointing any other judges." —Why, Sir, the Minister likes the majority of this ballotted Committee so well, that I should not be surprised if, on Friday, he should propose that the subject matter of the motion of my honourable friend (Mr. Whitbread), upon the conduct of the Admiralty, should be referred to this Committee. It is indeed a Committee to which he would be glad to refer any thing in which his character is interested. But it seems it is indecent to question the integrity of any Committee, whether chosen by ballot or not. If it be indecent, and made a charge against me, it is a charge which the practice of the right hon. Gentleman has given birth to. Corruption to a certain extent is now openly avowed. I think I heard something to that effect in the course of the debate upon this subject. I appeal to the oldest member in this House, Whether, until this day, he ever knew in the practice of this House of lists of the names of members (friends of the Minister), to be chosen by ballot, being distributed with such care, assiduity, and description; and where a member, to whom such a list was given, avowed it to a certain extent, and publicly acted in conformity? There have been times, Sir, when a predecessor of your's, sitting in that chair, would not have heard that speech without instantly resenting it as an insult to the dignity of this House. But these were times, when the cant of Opposition was prevalent, I suppose. Be it so. It is not now the cant of a right honourable Gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Windham, we presume). It is true he canted as much as any of us on this side of the House against the influence of Ministers, against

the increase of the power of the Crown, against corruption. But what he has ever canted, he has so effectually recanted, that he is now as free from that old-fashioned vice as any man that ever sat upon the Treasury Bench. Is this a time to adhere to the old ground of suspicion against the corruption of the Minister in this House? I say it is. Is this a case in which we should do so? I say it is—I see the right honourable Gentleman to whom I have just alluded smile, as if he thought I should use the same influence as the present Minister does if I were in the same situation. Will he, upon his honour, declare he thinks so? Did he think so when I had the pleasure to call him my friend? Does he really in his heart conceive that if at any time I was accused in a point touching my honour, as the present Minister now is, that I should attempt to tamper with my judges, as he has done this very day? Sir, I am entitled to have these questions answered by that right honourable gentleman to my satisfaction. But to return to the question immediately before us. If the Directors of the Bank were to send in lists to the Members of this House, together with their opinion upon the Members who ought to be chosen upon the ballot for the Committee that has been chosen to-day, would not every body immediately declare they had given evidence of their own guilt? Does the Minister stand before you in a condition less culpable than the Bank Directors would be if they had interfered in the manner I have described? How comes this influence into this House, and how is it supported? We all know too well to be informed upon that subject; and when the particulars of the history of this transaction come to be properly and publicly known, it will be manifest to all the world, that, by the manner in which he has conducted this ballot, he has proved that he felt that he could not, dared not, meet the enquiry which I propose by the motion which is now before the House, and that, conscious of his guilt, he has shrunk from it. He has skulked from an enquiry which he cannot face. The state of this question now is, Whether the enquiry shall go to the Committee which is already ballotted, or to a separate Committee? And it is curious enough, although not wonderful, that those who were last night for separate Committees upon this subject are now for a joint Committee. They last night did not wish for a joint Committee, because, however sanguine their hopes might be, it was yet uncertain what the complexion would be of that Committee, and therefore they did not like to run the hazard, however small, which, God knows, under all the circumstances, was small indeed. They did not chuse, however,

ever, to run that hazard; and therefore they called for a separate Committee to determine their own object first, in which the House agreed with them, I think unfortunately. They have, however, now found out the complexion of that Committee, and they are so well pleased with it, that they are willing to refer every thing to that Committee. Why? Because the hazard is all over. It may be asked why we, who were last night for a joint, are now for a separate Committee? The reason is a very plain one: we know that whatever the case may be, the Minister will at all events be screened by this Committee, as every thing must be governed by the majority of that Committee, and therefore we say give us the chance of another Committee. And I think it would have been but fair to have given us notice last night of the purpose for which they knew this Committee was to be ballotted; instead of which, by a mere trick, they have conducted the whole proceeding as they thought fit.

With respect to the question of time, on which a learned Gentleman (the Attorney-General) has said a good deal, differing a little from the Minister, but which will, I dare say, be easily reconciled; he says, it is first necessary to satisfy the minds of the public upon this important business. I agree with him upon this point, but I differ from him in another. He thinks the public are agitated on the question of the solidity of the Bank. Does that appear any where but in the speeches of the Minister's friends in this House? Have the Directors of the Bank said so at any time? Did they apply to the Minister for his friendly aid? No: this mischievous union between Government and the Bank was by the compulsion of the Minister; it was from force exerted by him that they have joined. The Minister has seized the cash of the Bank, and therefore it is that the public mind is agitated, and, upon that view of the subject, justly agitated. But does that make an enquiry into the affairs of the Bank necessary? No: the enquiry ought to be into the conduct of the Minister. Do I distrust my banker? No: he is a solvent man, of good faith, punctuality, and honour, and all the world acknowledge him to be so. Do I want security for him? No; but I want to be secured against robbers who have entered his house, laid hold of all his cash, and then declared themselves his partners! I wish to know whether any man breathing had a doubt of the solidity of the Bank before the Minister laid his rapacious hands upon the cash there? Why, then, I ask, if the public mind be agitated, who has caused the mischief? It may be said, that there has been a great run upon the Bank for cash, and

and particularly for the last week. I readily admit it. But then, I say, that the conduct of the Minister was the cause of that. He it was, together with his associates, who struck terror in the public mind by the rumours of invasion. This is partly the cause of that run; but the Order in Council on Sunday, and the proclamation on Monday last, finished what had been begun upon that matter. All this is the natural effect of the system which the Minister has pursued in the course of the present war. Men will naturally be terrified when these artifices are employed to work upon their imaginations. They have been terrified, and we see the effect of that terror. It has been that of giving up to the management of the Minister all the interest of the stock of the public creditor. This is the effect of the Minister's system, perhaps the effect he intended to produce; for he must be a fool to expect any other effect from such a cause. I say, his conduct has struck more terror in the public mind than any misfortunes that have happened to us could have done, of which two or three memorable Bills I call to your recollection as a specimen. And now that the subject of invasion is thus presented to my mind, I shall deliver my opinion shortly upon it. No man in this country, I believe, feels less apprehension upon the subject of the invasion of Great Britain than I do. I am sanguine as to the favourable result, should so desperate a measure be attempted. An invasion would certainly be a great evil to us; but I do maintain, that if the French should land in this island as great a force as is practicable for them to land, I should think the mischief they could do to the permanent interests of this country comparatively small, when put in the scale opposite to the mischief which the proceedings of the last two or three days will occasion. This is my sincere opinion.

The honourable Gentleman who opposed my motion, first went into the consideration of a subject on which I ought to take some notice. He asked why more credit should be given to the accuser than the accused; one man asserts a thing roundly, another denies it in the same manner; why, without proof, should those who hear both, presume the one to be honourable and the other dishonourable? All these are in their nature, I admit it, unanswerable, because there is no reason for supposing, without evidence, that one side is more honourable than another. But surely I may say that interest attaches more powerfully on one side of this House than it does upon another. I do not say that there are not men of as great talents and abilities on the Ministerial side
of

of the House as there are on this. I do not say that many on the other side are not actuated by honourable motives; but when we find men confide in a Minister year after year, long after they have been told the effect which that confidence will produce; and when year after year these effects have as constantly appeared as they have been foretold, surely it is not very uncharitable to suppose that there is at least an unfortunate obstinacy in the continuance of such a confidence. An honourable Gentleman has said to night "that the Minister did not suppose, at the commencement, that this war would have been of so long duration; the Minister mistook the matter, therefore we should not judge of him too harshly?" Is mistake a ground for confidence? "He has expended much more money than could have been wished." Is that a ground for confidence? That honourable Gentleman had frequently opportunities of knowing all these things, for he was told of them from time to time, and yet he who is convinced that many things have been done which were improper, so much that he thinks they must never happen again, and that the confidence of the public can never be restored without a minute enquiry and great retrenchments, has uniformly neglected to set on foot such enquiry, or call for these retrenchments, for upon every question of that nature he has, without one exception, voted for the Minister; and now that his confidence is gone, he continues his support to the Minister!—"Misfortune is no proof of guilt." Certainly not. "We cannot prove the guilt of the Minister." How could we prove it without enquiry? Have we not repeatedly asked for it, and has it not been as repeatedly refused? In all these things that honourable Gentleman, who is thus convinced that nothing can save the nation but enquiry, refuses enquiry. It is only when the nation has become bankrupt that he assents to enquiry, and even then he says it should be put off to a distant day. When I see this sort of conduct on the part of those who support the Minister, must I be that man of modern candour after all, to say there is no corrupt influence that keeps them together? And shall I be told I am using harsh language when I say they are actuated by corrupt motives? Do I impute corruption to all the supporters of the present Minister? I certainly do no such thing; but to many of them I do. Here I am reminded by a train of thought of what was said by the late Lord Chatham: he said "that he had known men of great ambition for power and dominion, many whose characters

were

were tarnished by glaring defects, some with many vices, who, nevertheless, could be prevailed upon to join in the best public measures; but that the moment he found any man who had set himself down as a candidate for a peerage, he despaired of his being ever a friend to his country." Look at the history of the present Minister and of the peerages he has given away. And then ask yourself whether he has not gained an enormous influence in that way? Examine whether he had not disposed of more peerages than any other Minister ever did in England in the same length of time, in any part of our history?

I have heard of negative successes in this war. I do not wish to be an egotist, but I think I may say, without vanity, that I have some negative merit. I have not had the misfortune to counsel this odious, this ruinous war!—I have not had the misfortune to lend assistance to the destruction of hundreds of thousands of my fellow beings;—I have not had the misfortune to load my country with hundreds of millions of debt!—I have not had the misfortune to set my name to a proclamation, manifesting to the world the bankruptcy of my country! These are my negative merits, and I claim them as my due; and the Minister is welcome to despise, while I enjoy, the comfortable reflections that arise out of them.

It has been said, in the course of this debate, that whatever may be the present situation of this country, it would have been much worse if my honourable friend (Mr. Grey) had been one of its Ministers.—I do not wish to say all I think of my honourable friend. I leave it to others to form their opinion of his talents and his virtue, highly as I esteem them; my testimony is not valuable to him; it would, if I gave it, be subject to disadvantage, for as it proceeds from friendship it would be subject to the charge of being partial, for we all know that is a defect inseparable from friendship. But I call on the honourable Gentleman who said this country would be in a worse condition now than it is, if my honourable friend had been Minister during this war, to assign a reason for thinking so; thinking so? he cannot think it; but for saying so. Could any ambition, any folly, or any rashness of my honourable friend, supposing him to be guilty of any, have placed this country in a worse condition than it is in at this instant; let him point out the men—that is not so material—let him point out the means by which this country could have been brought to a worse condition

dition than it is in this very moment—perhaps he will say we should have made a disgraceful peace with France—perhaps, indeed, we should have made peace; but does he mean to say that we might not have made peace some time ago, and have made it upon terms that would have been better by sixty or a hundred millions than any man in this country can at this moment even hope to obtain; and we should have avoided also the act of bankruptcy which we are now discussing, and I say is the most calamitous one that ever took place in this country since the Revolution. But I do not wonder at this species of attack being made upon us who oppose the Minister. It is perfectly consonant to the character of many of those who have so long confided in the Minister, and who are now undeceived, and have dismissed their credulity, although they continue their support: we have contributed to undeceive them, and they cannot forgive us for it. This reminds me of a scene that was written by a close observer of human nature, and who knew how to paint it: I mean Ben Johnson. It is to be found in the *Alchymist*, wherein it appears “that the impostor had played “his tricks very successfully for a long time upon his be- “holders, and when he was detected, the dupes became very “angry, not at the impostor, but at those who had detected “him.” So in the case before us, the dupes of the Minister do not direct their anger against the impostor, but against those who have detected him, and therefore I do not wonder at their abusing us.

I have long thought that the Minister was driving this country rapidly to ruin, but I never thought I should have seen it realised as it has been this day; and this too but a few weeks after he had boasted of the wealth, the commerce, the resources of this country being as it were untouched, the end of all which pompous declaration is a public undisguised bankruptcy. (Here the Chancellor of the Exchequer shewing some marks of disapprobation.) Mr. Fox said, what! does the Minister deny it? The fact is certainly recorded. But I should not wonder if the public odium should fall less upon the Minister than upon many persons who sit around, for they were rather more to blame for listening to, than he for amusing them with absurd tales. And here again, I must be excused for adverting to what has been said upon the conduct of the Minister “that he did not “think the war would continue so long.” Was he not told of it? Was not this House warned of it? Have we not mentioned it from day to day as the probability of the case!—But he is wiser than us, and therefore his opinion is of more weight than ours.—Be it so. But if, by a

series of events you find that, with all his wisdom he has brought you to a public bankruptcy, surely there can be nothing unreasonable in asking you to examine a little before you give him any further confidence. But it seems after all, "that our affairs are not in a state of bankruptcy. There has been no act of bankruptcy committed." If the Minister means to say there is no law in England by which you can strike a docket against the Government, I shall agree with him. There certainly is no such statute, nor any legal authority for declaring it so. But in the common acceptance of the phrase "A Bankruptcy," I understand that state or any body of men, to be bankrupt who cannot pay their creditors what is due, and acknowledged to be due to them.—You owe your creditors large, very large sums, which you refuse to pay—"No, we do not *refuse* to pay. We only say we will not pay in *money*, but we will pay in *paper*." "Well," say the creditors, "we will not take your paper."—"Not take our paper, why you always used to take it."—The practice, to be sure, is a little different between taking paper by choice and taking it by force; at least I think so. The Minister and his friends are welcome to be of another opinion. I think that paper is not all alike, I make some difference between the paper for which I can have money, and that for which I cannot have money when I want money. You formerly gave your creditors paper for which they could have money; now you give them paper for which they cannot have money; that is the difference: whether that be a bankruptcy or not, let the present holders of your paper determine; but all these distinctions are frivolous and idle. Bankrupts you are in the common sense of mankind, and I say that was brought on by the misconduct of the Minister, and if it be your object to retrieve yourselves from your misfortunes, you cannot do better than adopt this motion for enquiry into the conduct which has brought you into your present condition. If you neglect that, you will proceed from bad to worse, and your total and irretrievable ruin will overtake you soon. The progress you have made upon your road to destruction has been but slow; but believe me you have not long to travel if you do not take another course. I am blamed for calling the Minister a criminal, I wish he did not deserve it; but I am bound to say, that upon the face of things he appears to be a very great criminal; he seems to me to have nothing to plead in his own excuse; he enjoys the approbation of his sovereign, has possessed for years the unlimited confidence of this House, pretends to be a man of talents equal to the task of managing your affairs; he has never been refused any supply

ply, however enormous that he has asked, and yet he has, with all these advantages, brought you into a state of bankruptcy. The question therefore is, Will you or will you not institute an enquiry into his conduct? Different times have their different customs, and I will for a moment revert to what was the feeling of this House, and of the people of this country, a quarter of a century ago. Let us suppose twenty years ago, or to come a little nearer, ten years ago, but we must not come too near; what, I say, would have been the feelings of this House, if, ten years ago, any man had said, you think your finances very prosperous, yet in the beginning of the year 1797, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will issue a proclamation to prohibit the Bank of England paying any one man in money for a Bank note! Would you not have thought such a man a lunatic? Or if you thought he was not so, and he had been a member of this House, would you not have impeached him as an enemy to the State, and loudly called for punishment upon him? and yet you see such is your case at this very hour.—“But circumstances have altered the case since that time.”—Indeed they have, but what are these circumstances? Have not all the acts of the Minister been gradually leading to this very point? Can you not trace them? And when I am told that I should have acted as he has done were I in the same situation, I beg leave to deny it, and I call on every man, who knows the whole of my political life to state a single instance of my promise for the public service, which in any situation I have not endeavoured to fulfil. I know this part of this discussion is unimportant, but that is not my fault. I was called upon to enter into it by the attack which has been made upon me. I say again, that every thing you have heard calls upon you, in the discharge of the duty you owe to the people of this country, to enter into an enquiry into the causes which have brought you into this degraded condition. If it should appear, as I hope and believe it will, that this condition was brought upon you by the misconduct of the Minister, then you have the consolation to reflect, that your affairs may yet be in some degree retrieved; but if it shall turn out, as I trust in God it will not, that your affairs have been as well conducted as human prudence could conduct them, you can expect nothing but inevitable ruin. The only means to ascertain this is, that of your relinquishing your confidence in the Minister, and entering into a full enquiry into his conduct, which, I say, has brought you into this situation. If you do not, it will be matter of indifference to me how you ballot for any Committee in future upon this business. I have seen by the management of

these two debates, that the Minister's object has been to put off the enquiry into his conduct as long as he can, and also to secure to himself a Committee of his own friends by whom he is to be tried.

The House divided—

Ayes, (For the Motion) — — 67

Noes, (Against it) — — 141

Mr. *Sheridan* then moved, "That Mr. Fox be added to the Committee on the affairs of the Bank, &c." on which the House divided—

Ayes, (For the Motion) — — 53

Noes, (Against it) — — 144

Adjourned.

The following is a list of the Minority on Wednesday, March 1, on Mr. Fox's Motion to appoint a Committee to enquire into the causes which produced the Order of Council, the 26th of February.

Sir John Aubrey, Bt.	Aldborough.
Wm. Baker, Esq.	Hertfordshire, County.
John Baker, Esq.	Canterbury.
Geo. Barclay, Esq.	Bridport.
Charles Geo. Beaucherk, Esq.	Richmond.
Robert Biddulph, Esq.	Herefordshire, County.
Wm. Wilberforce Bird, Esq.	Coventry.
Hon. Edward Bouverie,	Northampton.
James Brogden, Esq.	Launceston.
John Bullock, Esq.	Essex, County.
Sir Francis Burdett, Bt.	Boroughbridge.
Geo. Byng, Esq.	Middlesex, County.
Tho. Wm. Coke, Esq.	Norfolk, County.
Alderman Combe,	London, City.
Sir Lionel Copley, Bt.	Tregony.
John Courtenay, Esq.	Appleby.
John Crewe, Esq.	Cheshire, County.
John Christian Curwen, Esq.	Carlisle.
Wm. Joseph Denison, Esq.	Camelford.
Sir Geo. A. W. S. Evelyn, Bt.	Warwickshire, County.
General Fitzpatrick,	Tavistock.
Sir Henry Fletcher, Bt.	Cumberland, County.
Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox.	Westminster.
Vif. Galway,	Pontefract.
Sir Wm. Geary, Bt.	Kent, County.

James Greene, Esq.	Arundel.
Charles Grey, Esq.	Northumberland, County.
James Hare, Esq.	Knareborough.
John Harrison, Esq.	Thetford.
Jervoise Clark Jervoise, Esq.	Yarmouth.
John Jeffery, Esq.	Poole.
Nathaniel Jeffreys, Esq.	Coventry.
Wm. Jolliffe, Esq.	Petersfield.
John Langston, Esq.	Minehead.
Sir Wm. Lemon, Bt.	Cornwall, County.
James Martin Lloyd, Esq.	Steyning.
James Martin, Esq.	Tewkesbury.
Sir Wm. M. Milner, Bt.	York.
John Nicholls, Esq.	Tregony.
Dudley North, Esq.	Banbury.
Wm. Norrhey, Esq.	Newport.
John Geo. Phillips, Esq.	Carmarthen.
Henry Pierfe, Esq.	Northallerton.
Wm. Plumer, Esq.	Hertfordshire, County.
Geo. Porter, Esq.	Stockbridge.
Hon. John Rawdon,	Launceston.
Hon. Geo. Rawdon,	Lincoln.
Joseph Richardson, Esq.	Newport.
Richard Bateman Robson, Esq.	Oakhampton.
Lord John Russell,	Tavistock.
Lord Wm. Russell,	Surrey, County.
Hon. St. Andrew St. John,	Bedfordshire, County.
John Scudamore, Esq.	Hereford.
George Shum, Esq.	Honiton.
Wm. Smith, Esq.	Sudbury.
Lord Robert Spencer,	Wareham.
Lord Stanley,	Preston.
Charles Sturt, Esq.	Bridport.
Benastre Tarlton, Esq.	Liverpool.
Geo. Tierney, Esq.	Southwark.
Lord John Townshend,	Knareborough.
Hon. Henry Tufton,	Rochester.
George Walpole, Esq.	Derby.
James Walwyn, Esq.	Hereford.
Charles Callis Western, Esq.	Malden.
Sir Edward Winnington, Bt.	Droitwich.
Earl Wycombe,	Chipping Wycombe.

TELLERS.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. Stafford.

Samuel Whitbread, Esq. Bedford.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2.

The *Lord Chancellor* came down to the House rather early, and their Lordships proceeded to appoint the Secret Committee for investigating the affairs of the Bank of England, pursuant to the resolution of the House last Tuesday.

The following is the list of the Secret Committee:

Earl of Chatham,
Winchelsea,
Graham,
Hardwicke,
Liverpool.

Vif. Sydney,
Baron Grenville,
Ossory,
De Dunstanville.

The bill for increasing the capital in stock of the East-India Company, was brought up from the House of Commons, and read a first time.

Received from the Commons the bill for enabling the Bank of England to issue notes under 5l. The bill was read a first and second time, and committed, and was ordered to be read a third time the next day.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, MARCH 2.

CARLISLE COMMITTEE.

Mr. *Mainwaring*, chairman of the Committee appointed to try the merits of the Carlisle election, reported that the fitting members were duly elected, that the petition against the return was not frivolous or vexatious, and that the opposition to the petition was not frivolous or vexatious.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* moved the second reading of the bill for suspending the acts relative to the issue of small notes.

The bill being read a second time, and the question for the commitment being put,

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the general power of issuing notes, which would be given by this bill, would be attended with bad effects. If the poor industrious labourer could not procure

cure the full value for the note, it might give rise to great discontents. In order to prevent any disturbances which this probable evil might occasion, he thought that at any price, for what was to be put in competition with the public tranquillity, at any expence, something ought to be done to obviate any consequence of this kind. He suggested that some instantaneous issue of silver coin should be made, that copper pieces of 2d. or 3d. value should likewise be made, to afford some supply for the demand which must be occasioned from the issue of paper.

Mr. *Bird* said that there were means provided in the bill to enforce, in a summary manner, payment of the notes to be issued three days after demand.

Mr. *Sheridan* was afraid that such a provision would be attended with little advantage, as it would be attended with expence in the execution.

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* thought that the issue of notes ought to be confined to country bankers, for the indiscriminate issue would bring forward too much of this paper.

Mr. *Whitbread* agreed in opinion with Mr. *Sheridan*.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought that it would be adviseable to pass the bill, as a temporary measure, in the fullest extent.

Mr. *Whitbread* was proceeding to make some observations on the provisions of the bill, when the Speaker reminded the House that these points might be discussed in the Committee.

The Committee was postponed till the report of the members chosen by ballot to try the Colchester election was brought up.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House on the bill for enabling bankers and manufacturers to issue small notes.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* supported the bill as a temporary measure in the fullest extent, and intimated that it was in contemplation to issue coin, both of silver and copper.

A conversation ensued upon a suggestion of Mr. *Sheridan*, that the issue of notes should be limited to the bankers, because this would prevent too great an issue, and guard better against forgery, and support the credit of the notes. This was supported by Mr. *Fox*, Mr. *Whitbread*, Mr. *Crewe*, Mr. *Wigley*, Mr. *Western*, &c.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* and the *Solicitor General* contended,

176 WOODFALL'S PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS: [COMMONS,
contended, that it was better to allow manufacturers themselves to do it, who would not issue more than was necessary, as payment might be enforced in a summary manner after three days demand. The bill then went through the Committee, the report was read and agreed to, and the bill ordered to be read a second time the next day.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3.

A petition was presented from Sir Godfrey Webster Vassal, Bt. praying leave for a bill to be brought in to enable him to divorce his present wife.—Ordered to lie on the table.

The East-India Company's capital bill passed a Committee of the whole House. The report was received, and the bill ordered to be read a third time the next day.

The royal assent was given, by commission, to the bill empowering the governors and company of the Bank of England to issue notes of a less value than five pounds; and also to fix private bills.

The commissioners on this occasion were, the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Earl Spencer.

NOTICES.

Earl *Spencer* rose and said, he had received dispatches from Sir John Jervis, conveying intelligence of a signal victory obtained by that gallant admiral over the Spanish fleet, which could not but be matter of the utmost congratulation from him to their Lordships; the official detail of that happy event was not ready to be laid before the House, but it would be submitted to their Lordships and the public between that and Monday. He rose then to give notice, that on Monday he should have the honour of moving the thanks of the House to admiral Sir John Jervis, for his very gallant and meritorious conduct on an occasion, which reflected the greatest lustre on his Majesty's arms, and could not but prove of the most essential advantage to the country.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he had been a good deal disappointed the preceding day, on finding that the House was up on his arrival at five o'clock, which he had understood to be the hour at which the King's Minister generally came down and public business commenced. He had much wished to have been present when the ballot of a Secret Committee took place; and he thought a bill of some importance (the bill

bill for repealing the act prohibiting the issue of notes by the Bank of England, for a less sum than 5l.) had been hurried through the House with great precipitation. He should not have opposed that bill, nor did he mean to lay any stress on what he had said respecting the ballot taking place so early in the day as it had done, but surely some general rule as to the commencement of public business ought to obtain. He rose, however, then to state his extreme disapprobation of the mode of inquiry into the affairs of the Bank that had been instituted, and to give notice that on Monday he should bring forward an enquiry on the subject, and those causes that gave rise to the Order of Council of the 26th of February, on a more enlarged and more extensive scale; he therefore moved that the Lords be summoned for Monday.

The *Lord Chancellor* quitted the woollack, for the purpose of replying to what the noble Duke had thrown out respecting the proceedings of the preceding day. He was aware, that four o'clock was at first suggested as the most proper hour for proceeding on the business; but it was very shortly afterwards deemed more eligible to commence at two o'clock, and had not his Grace left the House so early, he would have heard the alteration suggested, the question put in the regular form, and agreed to. It was, his Lordship said, notified in a pretty full House, and in the hearing of several Peers now present. He hoped the noble Duke would not therefore for a moment suppose, that it was the intention of any of their Lordships to take the House by surprise, or that he had been at all to blame.

THE MARQUIS OF LANDSDOWN.

The *Lord Chancellor* quitted the woollack, and acquainted the House, that in consequence of certain proceedings on the part of a noble Peer, on Tuesday night, without his having (through mere inadvertence) qualified himself, by taking the oaths strictly enjoined by law, he became necessarily liable to such penalties and disabilities * as their Lordships must be well acquainted with. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, he was pretty well aware what must be the feelings of the House on the occasion. A legislative proceeding was indispensable to qualify that noble person to sit among their Lordships; and, on such an occasion, it was also requisite to apply to his Majesty.—On this part of the question, he was authorised to declare his Majesty's full consent to their Lordships entertaining such a proposition as he had al-

VOL. II. 1797.

A a

luded

* Vide Statute of *William III. Anno 13, Cap. 6.*

luded to ; and being thus warranted, he would move their Lordships to agree to an act for the purpose, which he then held in his hand.

The act was then read by the clerk, and was intituled, "An act to relieve William, Marquis of Lansdown, from certain pains, penalties, and disabilities, incurred by him, &c."

The proposition of the Lord Chancellor fully meeting the sense of their Lordships, the bill was read a first and second time, *nem. diss.* and ordered to be committed.

Adjourned till the next day.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3.

A message was received from the Lords, informing the House, that their Lordships had passed the bill for removing doubts with respect to the Bank issuing Bank bills, under the sum of 5l. without any amendment.

The *Speaker*, with the members, were then summoned to the upper House, to attend a royal commission. On his return, he informed the House, that the royal assent had been given by commission to the Bank note bill, and to other public and private bills.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* moved the order of the day, for suspending the acts of the 15th and 17th of his present Majesty, suspending the issue of small notes.

Mr. *Hawkins Browne* said, that he would oppose the passing of the bill, unless a clause was inserted in it to repeal it during the present session. The more a person was embarrassed in his circumstances, the more apt he would be to resort to the expedient of issuing quantities of these small notes. He wished therefore, that in order to prevent the abuse of the bill, some severer punishment should be enacted than the mere penalty of distress. It would be impossible to correct the fraudulent issue of those bills without rendering the persons, who should fail in their payment, liable to be imprisoned and sent to the House of Correction; except these severe restraints were adopted, every individual would be enabled to set up a mint in his own house, and increase the artificial wealth of the country to the destruction of real credit. He concluded with moving, that instead of three months, the operation of the bill should be confined to one month.

Mr. *W. Bird* begged leave to bring up a clause, which he was desirous should be inserted in the bill, namely: "That

if

if any person should fail in the payment of a note three days after it became due, that it should be lawful for the justices to summon him before them, to award costs to the plaintiff with the payment of the amount of the note, and to levy distress upon the effects of the person so failing in his engagement.

Mr. *Sheridan* stated that this was as important a subject as could possibly engage the attention of the House in the present unfortunate situation of the country. One unfortunate consequence would follow from the issue of those bills, that if any should not be paid, a general distrust would take place with respect to their validity, and the whole would undergo a most alarming depreciation. At the same time it would be a most unfortunate thing to hold out to all the manufacturers in the kingdom, a menace of being imprisoned or sent to the House of Correction, if not from any fraudulent purpose, but from the failure of remittances, or the pressure of the times, they should be unable to make good their engagement. If the bill was accompanied with such a menace, instead of having the effect to afford a temporary relief to their credit, it would tempt them rather to incur the evils of immediate bankruptcy, than run the risk of being subjected to a punishment so painful and degrading. At the same time, if these bills were to rest merely on nominal credit, they would not answer the purpose to afford relief to the laborious poor. If presented to the baker and butcher, they would not be accepted by them to their full amount, and this circumstance must also tend to create a general depreciation. He should therefore propose, in order to remedy this evil, that the persons issuing those notes, as a security for their payment, should previously deposit property adequate to the amount of the notes issued, and that no individuals should be allowed to issue those notes, whose substance did not allow them to make this deposit. This precaution, he remarked, would remove every chance for fraud or depreciation, which must otherwise inevitably take place in the circulation of this paper. If manufacturers were in such a situation as to justify them in issuing those notes, they must either be on such a footing of credit with their banks, or in possession of good bills, which would enable them to produce security to the amount of the notes issued. He illustrated his proposition by referring to the instance of lottery tickets. The dealers in those tickets were allowed to divide them in small shares for the accommodation of their customers, after

having deposited the original tickets as a security. He then gave notice of his intention to move that evening for an immediate supply of copper coinage in pennies and two-pennies, for the relief of the laborious poor. He should not move for any fresh coinage of halfpence, as if these were of the proper standard, they must tend to cut out all those which were now in circulation, an evil which might be of greater magnitude than the relief it was intended to afford. He could not confide for a moment in the diligence of Ministers: else when they foresaw, as they must necessarily have done, the approach of this great public calamity, they would have taken measures to have had by this time waggon-loads of this useful coin coming up from Bolton's manufactory at Birmingham.

The *Master of the Rolls* agreed with Mr. Sheridan, that it would be desirable to provide a fund to answer the notes before they were issued, but he also thought that some penalty should be annexed to the non-payment of them, and that in a summary way: otherwise the poor man, who was not able to go to law with the rich man, might not be able to get his money. He wished to hold out a terror to prevent a man from issuing notes, unless he had goods to answer them.

The *Speaker* observed, that as the clause contained a penalty, it could not be inserted into the Bill, unless it went through a Committee of the whole House; and the proper place to argue on the insufficiency of the penalty, would be in that Committee; and the House accordingly resolved itself into a Committee on the bill.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then spoke against the penal part of the clause: he thought it would be hard that to personal misfortune personal disgrace and punishment should be superadded. With respect to what had fallen from Mr. Sheridan about copper coin, he had no objection to the address which he meant to offer: and he thought it necessary then to inform the House that directions had been already given, and proper measures taken to promote that object.

Mr. Fox and Mr. Bryan Edwards spoke upon the clause. The latter expressed himself directly against the Bill, because it went to multiply the quantity of paper in circulation; and thus increase the very evil which had caused the distress of the country.

After a further conversation between the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Wilberforce, Sir John Mitford, Mr. W. Bird, and Mr. Fox, it was finally agreed that the

blank

blank should be filled up with imposing a penalty of twenty shillings, in addition to the payment of costs and the power of levying distress on the effects of those persons who should fail in paying the notes they had issued three days after they had become due.

Mr. *W. Bird* then desired, that the duration of the Bill might be limited to one month instead of three, with a power to renew the act if necessary.

The *Speaker* observed, that in the interval between the expiration and the renewal of the Bill, the Easter recess would occur, so that there might not be time to renew it.

Mr. *Bastard* said, he could not sit in his place and hear holidays talked of at a time when the salvation of the country was at stake.

Mr. *Sheridan* declined enforcing his suggestion to oblige individuals previously to deposit a security adequate to the amount of the notes they should issue. The House being resumed, the Bill was finally passed, and it was agreed, after some discussion, that it should continue in operation till the first of May next.

He then moved, "That an humble address should be presented to his Majesty, that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to give directions that measures shall be taken for procuring an immediate supply of copper coinage to pay the wages of the laborious poor in the present exigency."

The motion was unanimously agreed to.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JERVIS.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, it was my intention this night to have given notice of a motion for Monday, not then conceiving that the intelligence on which it is founded had got abroad so generally among the public, as I since find it has done. Having, however perceived that the intelligence is as extensively known as it is matter of the highest satisfaction and exultation, I cannot for one moment delay affording an opportunity to this house to express those sentiments of admiration and gratitude which every British bosom must feel on such an occasion. One reason why I was chiefly unwilling to bring forward a motion of thanks on this day was, that I was extremely desirous, that previous to that step, the House and the public should be in possession of all the facts and documents relative to this illustrious transaction. I was anxious not to proceed to this pleasing task of my duty without being sanctioned by the authority of the gallant Admiral himself, who in his official dispatches has
detailed

detailed all the circumstances relative to this glorious event, with a degree of perspicuity and clearness which reflect on him the highest honour, and which I only should injure by any statement or repetition of mine. Waving, however, any detail, and satisfied that the general knowledge of the event can only excite in this House the same rapturous sensations, which I understand have been already expressed by the public, in order to command the most cordial and heartfelt assent to the motion which I now mean to bring forward, it is only necessary for me to intimate, that accounts have this day arrived in town that a British Admiral with fifteen sail of the line, fought, pursued, attacked, and conquered a fleet of the enemy, consisting of twenty-seven sail of the line, and, as trophies of this victory, the most signal and illustrious that ever was achieved in the annals of the British navy, has sent into port, as prizes two ships of 112 guns each, and two others, one of 80 and one of 74 guns. Whether he has since reaped any more glorious trophies of his distinguished success, I am yet not enabled to state to the House. But sure I am that every British heart must be united to pay to the gallant Admiral that tribute of gratitude and admiration due to his admirable conduct and his eminent services to the public. Penetrated with this feeling, and anxious no longer to repress the impatience which every member must feel to join in this tribute, I shall conclude with moving, "That the thanks of this House be given to Admiral Sir John Jervis, Knight of the Bath, for his able and gallant conduct on the 14th of February last, in the most brilliant and decisive victory over the Spanish fleet, consisting of twenty-seven sail of the line, by the fleet under his command."

Mr. *Fox* said, in seconding this motion, I rise only to say a very few words. By returning our thanks on this occasion, we cannot but feel with peculiar pride and satisfaction, that we express our gratitude and acknowledgments for the most brilliant and illustrious exploit ever performed in the annals of this country.

Mr. *Keene* said, I do not conceive that on this occasion a mere expression of our thanks is a sufficient testimony of our sense of the merit of the gallant admiral. I think it our indispensable duty to follow it up with a resolution that may substantially mark the deep impression we feel of the distinguished service that has been rendered to the country, and which I am confident will meet the general wishes of the nation, and command the warmest tribute of public approbation.

bation. I shall therefore move, " That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that his Majesty would be graciously pleased to confer some signal mark of his royal favour on Admiral Sir John Jervis, for his gallant and meritorious exertions on the 14th of February, &c."

Mr. *Secretary Dundas*. I should be extremely sorry that any disagreement of opinion should arise on any motion suggested on this occasion. No man who knows my sentiments of the character and public services of the gallant Admiral, can possibly suspect that I should be in the smallest degree backward to bear the most decided testimony to his merits, or conceive any reward too great for his distinguished and successful exertions; but at the same time by expressing their thanks on this occasion, the House discharges that duty which belongs to them. It is surely not necessary for them to interfere with the reward which is so eminently due to this illustrious character, or to take out of the hands the task which peculiarly belongs to the Royal office, and which must be so highly gratifying to the Royal feelings. It cannot surely be suspected, that in this instance, there will be any want either of inclination or promptitude on the part of the Executive Government, to do justice to the eminent services of the gallant Admiral, and to meet the wishes of a grateful people.

Mr. *Martin* said, this naval victory affords me peculiar satisfaction, as it furnishes a decided proof that if we confine our operations to sea affairs, we cannot fail of success, and shall at once consult the interests of humanity and the glory of the British empire.

Mr. *Keene* said, notwithstanding what has been urged by the right honourable Secretary, I am still of opinion that it is incumbent upon this House to express some peculiar mark of their approbation for a service which is universally admitted to be the most meritorious and distinguished that has ever occurred in the annals of the country. I am convinced that it is only by adopting the motion I have proposed, that the House can render a just tribute to the merits of the gallant Admiral, or adequately meet the grateful sense of the nation at large. At all events I am desirous, for the sake of this illustrious person, that the motion may be recorded on the journals of this House. Mr. Keene concluded with repeating the terms of the motion.

Sir *Charles Bunbury* rose to second the motion. I am convinced (said he) that if Parliament are desirous to evince on this

this occasion that they feel along with their constituents, they cannot discover too great promptitude in conferring on the gallant Admiral the most signal and unequivocal proofs of their gratitude and admiration. This brave officer by his conduct has stamped a reputation which will be as lasting as the annals of British glory. The name of Jervis will ever be dear and illustrious to his country. One of the captured ships, which rank among the trophies of his victory, suggests a title appropriate to the character of the gallant Admiral. Allow me to greet him by the appellation of *Salvador del Mundo*.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, I could not possibly have conceived that, on this particular topic, any point could have occurred, which would in the smallest degree be distressing to my feelings. I do not, however, know that any subject could possibly have been introduced so extremely distressing to my feelings as the present motion. It cannot surely be conceived, that there can exist the smallest difference of sentiment with respect to the extent and value of the services of the gallant Admiral, or the feelings of gratitude and admiration which are due to his character. But even amidst those effusions of gratitude and admiration, which are peculiarly called forth by that brilliant and decisive exploit which engages our present attention, it is incumbent upon the House not to suffer themselves to be carried from their sense of propriety by the impulse of their feelings; or, amidst the ardour of their acknowledgements, to confound those distinct functions which belong to the different bodies of the legislature. I again repeat that, with respect to the extent of the merit and the value of the services of the brave officer in question, there can be no difference of opinion; nor can any expression of approbation, and testimony of reward, be conceived too great for his admirable conduct and distinguished services to the country. But I must suggest to the House, transcendant as is the brilliancy of the present transaction, whether the history of this country can be expected in the present moment to produce any instance of gallantry and prowess of such extensive benefit, and unrivalled splendor, as cannot find some nearly similar example in its former annals. There is, surely, no point of military glory, no proof of professional desert, on the part of British officers, which is new to the record of our national fame. But at no period, I believe, has it ever occurred, that, on the first intimation of victory, such a motion should be brought forward in this House. Can it possibly be suspected, that on the part of the highest branch of the legislature there is such an extreme insensibility to the glory and interest of the country,
that

that there can exist the smallest disposition to overlook the merits, or pass by the claims, of the most valuable servants of the public. I do not know that in any former instance of the most splendid naval achievements any such proceeding, as that which is now proposed, was sanctioned by the House of Commons. I can confidently refer to what took place with respect to the gallant and beneficial services of Rodney, of Keppel, and of Howe—officers, in whose case, the House will not surely be accused of having felt any coldness of approbation, or deficiency of gratitude. But what will perhaps be considered as a still more extraordinary instance in the history of the country, I am not aware that any such proceeding was even adopted with respect to the famous Duke of Marlborough, whose name makes so illustrious a figure in the annals of the country. Can it be supposed that the Crown can ever require to be prompted to pay the just tribute of approbation and honours to those who have eminently signalized themselves by their professional merits, and their public services? If the House feel peculiar sentiments of satisfaction and gratitude in contemplating the meritorious exploits of the gallant Admiral, it must be no small addition to their pleasure to find that the same sentiments are no less felt by that part of the legislature to which we are all bound to look up with the highest respect, and to which it peculiarly belongs to distinguish by its favours, those whom it honours with its approbation. On the part of his Majesty's Ministers, I can safely affirm, that before this last splendid instance of the good conduct and valour of the gallant Admiral, we have not been remiss in watching the uniform tenor of his professional career; we have witnessed, in the whole of his proceedings, such instances of perseverance, of diligence, and of exertion in the public service, as, though less brilliant and dazzling than this last exploit, are only less meritorious as they are put in competition with the glory of a single day, which has produced such extensive and incalculable benefits to the British empire. Feeling such to have been my high sense of the conduct of this brave officer, during the whole of his command, I am not afraid of incurring any imputation of a desire to subtract from his merits, or to withhold the honours to which he has so justly established his claim. I am only desirous that the approbation of this House should be conveyed in a manner consistent with the practice of the country, and the course of the Constitution. I confess that I should feel myself infinitely relieved by the consent of the honourable Gentleman to withdraw his motion. If he should persist to press it on the House, undoubtedly I

shall not attempt to get rid of it by a direct negative, on such a day as this; that were impossible; but I shall meet it, by moving the previous question.

Mr. *Sheridan* said It is impossible but that every man must feel the sentiment that every thing that can be done by this House ought to be done, in the present instance, to express our high sense of the distinguished merit and eminent services of the gallant Admiral. I differ, however, from the honourable mover of the resolution, who has stated, that for the sake of Sir John Jervis, he is, at all events, desirous that it should appear on the journals of this House. If the motion be put and opposed, to insert it on the journals of this House, instead of adding to the well-earned reputation of that brave officer, would, I conceive, have a contrary effect. The journals of this House do not contain the records of that brave officer's glory. They would only bear testimony to the rejection of the motion. I cannot, however, submit to the doctrine that this House have no right to interfere to express their marked approbation of a distinguished character, or to apply to his Majesty to signalize the most eminent public services by peculiar marks of his royal favour. If there was any chance that the present motion would be passed unanimously, it would experience my warmest approbation. I cannot allow the proud boast of the right honourable Gentleman to pass unnoticed, that in no instance has there appeared on the part of the executive government any degree of insensibility to the worth of gallant officers, or any want of promptitude to reward the claims of public services. The very mention of the name of the honourable Admiral must forcibly recal the recollection of his former services, and the degree of attention which they experienced from the executive government. No mark of honour, no testimony of reward, has hitherto followed from his gallant exertions, which Ministers feel themselves compelled to notice in terms of the highest panegyric. While they have withheld from him, and other illustrious characters, the just rewards of their merit, on whom have they chosen to throw away their honours? On persons, who have no pretensions to professional desert, who can exhibit no claims of public service. The late instances of individuals, on whom, for no reason whatever that could justify any addition of dignity in the eyes of the nation, the distinction of the peerage has been conferred, undoubtedly tends to cheapen the honour, and take away from it all idea of reward for public services. If any honour could be conferred on the gallant Admiral in a way so marked as to separate it from the mass of honours which have been lavished

wished on others, it would undoubtedly only be a just tribute for his distinguished services. I conceive that I am fully borne out by facts, when I aver that honours have not lately been conferred in a manner agreeable to the public voice, or the public wishes. I need only allude to the instance of a noble Lord (Howe), who, by his gallant and able conduct, had established the strongest claims upon the gratitude and justice of his country. A blue ribbon was then vacant. It was pointed out for the noble Lord by public expectation and public rumour. The noble Lord could certainly feel no desire for such a distinction from any motive of personal vanity. But it was natural he should wish for the dignity of the service to which he belonged, that it should experience the most distinguished marks of the royal approbation. But instead of the blue ribbon being given to the gallant and venerable Admiral, he was offered a paltry bauble, which he properly rejected, while this signal honour, which ought only to be accorded to the highest merit, was jerked on the shoulders of a person, for what claims of public service, I confess, I do not know, and I am disposed to think that the country must be equally at a loss to discover.

Mr. Keene said, Sir, I was certainly anxious to mark the conduct of the gallant Admiral by the most distinguished testimony of approbation which this House could confer; but, in compliance with what I find to be the wish of a great majority in this House, I shall not persist to press my motion.

Mr. Fox. Sir, I certainly do not rise to object to withdrawing the motion. I rise only to enter my decided protest against the doctrine laid down by the right honourable Gentleman, as if there was any thing contrary to the forms of this House, or the practice of the Constitution, in expressing our opinion in the most decided manner of services, eminent to a degree beyond any that ever called forward the honours of the Crown, or the rewards of this House. If this question had come to a division, I undoubtedly should have voted for it. I am persuaded that the proposition it contains is perfectly consistent with the nature of the Constitution; nor do I conceive that it would lessen the glory and achievements of the gallant Admiral that they were recommended to the notice and favour of his Majesty by the voice of the representatives of the people.

The original motion of Thanks to Sir John Jervis was then carried *nem. con.* with the most rapturous bursts of satisfaction from every quarter of the House.

Mr. Secretary Dundas then moved, that the thanks of this House be given to Vice Admiral Charles Thompson, Vice

Admiral Hon. W. Waldegrave, Rear Admiral William Parker, Commodore (now Rear Admiral) Nelson, Captain (now Sir Robert) Calder, first Captain of the *Victory*, and the several Captains, &c. of the fleet under Admiral Sir John Jervis, for their gallant and meritorious conduct, &c. Passed *nem. con.*

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, that in the next motion he was to make, he was confident that he should meet the sentiments of Sir John Jervis, who, on this occasion, had given the most flattering testimony to the good conduct and gallantry of the respective crews, and who must be desirous that those brave tars should be considered by the House of Commons as sharers of the merit, and partners of the glory, of this brilliant and decisive victory. He therefore moved, That the acknowledgments of the House be given to the seamen, marines, and soldiers, serving on board the different ships, and that the same be signified to them by their respective Captains. Passed *nem. con.*

Mr. *Grey* said, that, from feelings of private friendship as well as public gratitude, no man could rejoice more than he did in the brilliant victory which Sir John Jervis had achieved. He thought that a victory so distinguished should be marked with as decided testimonies of admiration as the House had ever in any case bestowed. He was sorry that it had been thought proper to withdraw the motion which had been made by the honourable Gentleman (Mr. Keene), because there were precedents for such a measure. The address of the House in the reign of Queen Anne, relative to the Duke of Marlborough, was a case directly in point, and a similar address, he thought, should have been presented on the present occasion.

Mr. *Sheridan* moved, "That there be laid before this House, an account of the savings (if any) which have been made in consequence of any report made by the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the fees and perquisites of certain offices."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* did not see the necessity of producing the accounts called for, especially as no grounds had been adduced for the propriety of their production. There was no question of any immediate pecuniary relief being derived from the sale of the Crown lands, though no inconsiderable advantage might reasonably be expected to arise to the public from their gradual improvement.

Mr. *Courtenay* moved, "That there be laid before the House, an account of the amount of the salary, and of the mode in which

which it was paid to the Tellers of the Exchequer in the year 1783."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* expressed his surprise how this enquiry could have occupied the honourable Gentleman's mind for fourteen years, without his having intimated it till 1797, when the question could not be solved without recurring to a period, of which he (Mr. Pitt) did not at present bear that particular circumstance in recollection.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the reason why the right honourable Gentleman seemed ignorant of the circumstance alluded to, was doubtless because he (Mr. Pitt) was not at that period First Lord of the Treasury. The motions made by him and his honourable friend were not without their objects and their grounds, for they were connected with a motion respecting the retrenchment of sinecure places, which was expected to take place on Monday next.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that no distinct answer could be given to any Gentleman on a detached fact, the connection of which could not now appear with a motion, with the particular views of which the House were as yet unacquainted.

Mr. *Grey* declared, that he could not perceive the necessity of stating the particular views of the motion alluded to; neither did he see that any inconvenience could arise from the production of the accounts now called for. Similar motions for an enquiry into these abuses had frequently been made during the last fourteen years; but they were always unfortunately rejected.

Mr. *Harrison* said, he did not wish to withhold any of the motives or views of his intended motion. He had more anxious, though perhaps not better founded hopes, that now, at least, under the general pressure of distress that weighed upon the country, some alleviation might be derived from the abolition of the sinecure places; for some check must necessarily be soon put to the prodigality of Ministers, and their wanton profusion of the public money.

After a few observations from Mr. *Courtenay* and Mr. *Sheridan*, their respective motions were withdrawn.

BANK OF ENGLAND.

Mr. *Bramston* brought up the report* of the Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the Bank, which was read, the substance of which is as follows:

The Committee stated, that they had examined the out-

* Vide Appendix.

standing claims against the Bank, with the corresponding assets, and found that on the 25th of February, the day to which the accounts could be made up with accuracy, the total amount of demands

On the Bank was	_____	13,770,390
Assets, not including the sum of 11,686,800l. of permanent debt due by Government, amounted to	_____	17,597,280
So that there was a surplus of	_____	3,826,890

Since the 25th of February considerable issues had been made, both in Bank notes and Government paper; but as these were upon corresponding securities, the balance in favour of the Bank was not at all diminished by them.

The report was ordered to be printed, and, on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, ordered to be taken into consideration on Monday.

The *Attorney General* said, that he could not avoid expressing his satisfaction at the report of the Committee, which he was convinced would afford not only consolation, but even give energy to the House and to the public mind. The Committee had proceeded to a faithful discharge of their duty in examining the first object pointed out to them by the order of the House, but they found the second an object of too much importance to come to an immediate decision upon it. They would, however, with all possible dispatch proceed to the consideration of it, though they could not fix a time for making their report with respect to the causes which produced the Order of Council, and the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of it. He had, however, the strongest reasons to think that there would appear the most satisfactory grounds to warrant in the first instance the necessity of the measure.

Mr. *Grey* declared, that as the right honourable gentleman had observed that it was impossible to ascertain any particular time for the report of the Committee on the second consideration, he should add, that the Committee had lost no time in the enquiry which they had already made, and they would not lose time in their further compliance with the order of the House.

Mr. *Fox* wished to know why the right honourable Gentleman appeared to be convinced that the report of the Committee would satisfy Gentlemen on the necessity of the measure?

Mr.

Mr. *Grey* observed, that the House was in possession of all the information which had come before the Committee, but that nothing could be brought forward with respect to the necessity of the measure, as the causes had not been yet taken into discussion.

The *Attorney General* wished to be understood to give no opinion as to the causes.

After an additional observation from Mr. Fox, the report was ordered to be taken into consideration on Monday next.

ATTEMPT TO INVADE IRELAND.

Mr. *Whitbread* said,—Sir, the House having been for some time occupied with the pressing consideration of the most important matters, I now rise in consequence of the notice which I have given, to institute an enquiry into the naval defence of the country at the time of the enemy's invasion of the sister kingdom. Since the attention of the House has this night been engaged in the satisfactory relation of the most signal and brilliant victory that has ever been obtained by the British fleet, I cannot suffer the account of it, however pleasing it must prove to the feelings of every friend to the safety and prosperity of the British empire, to pass unnoticed without entering my protest against Administration, and particularly the naval branch of it, for any share whatever in the success of this glorious action. It appears to me, Sir, that however great and highly entitled to praise the gallant conduct and able exertions of Admiral Sir John Jervis and the officers and men under his command may be, that in the same proportion as they command the admiration and gratitude of the country, we are called upon to censure the conduct of the Board of Admiralty for neglecting to secure to us by a judicious disposition of strength, the probability of success in a quarter where our arms have triumphed in a manner so splendid and honourable to the nation. I think, Sir, that instead of permitting the first Lord of the Admiralty to participate in the glory of an action, which reflects such honour on the British name, that an enquiry should be instituted into his conduct for suffering an inferior fleet to be opposed to that of the enemy. I will for a moment suppose, that Sir John Jervis had not succeeded in his gallant attempt, although I am convinced that his exertions would have been such as to have done himself the highest honour, and his country the greatest possible service; yet I contend, that if the issue of his spirit and skill
were

were of this disastrous nature, the first step taken by us in that case should have been an impeachment against the first Lord of the Admiralty, for suffering him to remain with so very inferior a squadron as 15 sail of the line on a station where the enemy had a fleet vastly superior in number, and possessed the most convenient opportunities of improving that very material advantage.

So much I have said upon a subject which in itself is attended with so many pleasant feelings, but it is painful to hint at other events which are of a very different complexion, and which excite very different emotions. The present week has displayed events so awful as must fill every mind with consternation. All attention, every faculty is turned to the circumstances of our internal situation. Measures have been taken, the consequences of which it is yet impossible to foresee or to calculate. Though aware of the embarrassments under which the country laboured, and previously determined upon the measure which he adopted, the Minister ventured to take a step of such importance without having considered the sensation it would produce, or digested a system of measures to meet the exigency. In this situation have we to contend with an active, enterprising and victorious enemy without, an enemy whom the vanity of Ministers and their adherents once flattered itself with the hopes of conquering by their financial difficulties, but who, in their turn, have attempted to carry the war into our own home; in the contest with whom too our own finances have been brought to the verge of ruin, and when it appears doubtful whether the right honourable Gentleman will be able to save us from the gulph of Bankruptcy. I need not remind the House that enquiry into naval and military operations is one of the most antient and undoubted privileges of the House. In the most glorious periods of our history Parliament has exercised this right, and thus contributed to the splendour of our achievements. The total abandonment of this right by the last Parliament is the prime cause of our present situation. When this country was rising to the highest pitch of commercial splendour which it ever reached, the last Parliament entered into the war. They exchanged privilege for confidence, and exchanged that proud situation this country once held for the humiliating state to which we are now reduced. I trust, however, that this House will at length resume its rights, that it will enquire into the causes that have produced so fatal an alteration; that it will face, that

that it will probe our situation. I hope the period for this is not far distant, and that the arts which Ministers have hitherto employed to elude an enquiry, will no longer prevail. One great point in that enquiry must be the naval conduct of Ministers during the war. An honourable friend of mine has endeavoured at different times to rouse the House to a sense of their privileges, and to prevail upon them to look into their situation, but without success. In the partial enquiry which I now intend to propose, I trust the House will act in a different manner. The people of England, wounded in that pride of naval superiority which they enjoy, and alarmed in their fears that the war may be carried into their own firesides, demand that enquiry; it is called for by every Gentleman who respects the rights of the House; it is called for by a regard to the honour of the naval officers who were concerned in the operations which it involves. I am not disposed to throw blame upon any officer; I do not mean to accuse any department, but it is my object to investigate to whom blame is justly to be ascribed. When the exploits of our fleets and single ships have gained a degree of glory never surpassed in our history, when we have upwards of one hundred ships of the line, and five hundred ships of war of every description, it is right to know why the result has not been so favourable to this country as we had a right to expect; it is right to know why our trade has of late suffered so severely by the depredations of the enemy; it is right to know why almost every expedition which the French have undertaken has been crowned with success; it is right to know how they have been able unmolested to transport their squadrons from one port to another; and above all, it is right to know why with ninety ships of the line in the European seas, the enemy were able unintercepted to leave their own coasts to attempt an invasion upon Ireland; to return without molestation to their own ports, while to that providence which has so often protected this country we were indebted for defence. At the opening of the present session, the design of invasion was announced; measures of defence, whether proper or improper is not at present the question, were brought forward by the right honourable Gentleman. Surely, with the means of information which they possessed, and the secret service money they employed, it was in the power of Ministers to have known that the invasion meditated by the enemy was to be directed against Ireland, and it was their duty to have been prepared

with that naval superiority which this country enjoys, to have turned the design to the complete ruin of the enemy. Upon our navy last year more money was expended than for several years together when the illustrious father of the right honourable Gentlemen presided over the affairs of this country; when the French were every where beaten by sea: when they durst no sooner venture out of port than they were taken. Now, with a navy upon which such immense sums have been bestowed, with a force of such decided superiority, the enemy might have executed their attempt but for the storm by which they were frustrated. If our deliverance from this danger is not to be ascribed to the elements, I should be glad to hear how it was owing in any respect to the measures adopted by Ministers on this critical occasion. Let us review the perilous circumstances in which we were placed; let us recollect what at this time was the state of Ireland, and contemplate the consequences which might have ensued. From information, upon which I can perfectly rely, I can venture to state, that there was then in that country, no adequate force to repel the enemy. The commander in chief, in his dispatches, even says, "that he is making every preparation for defence, and that he thinks he will have a sufficient force," &c. From the accounts I have received, the force there was not three thousand, totally destitute of artillery. Had the enemy effected their landing, the capture of Cork would have been inevitable. What was the state of Cork at this critical moment? It was full of stores; the provisions of the navy for the ensuing year were collected in it. Had the enemy been successful in their attempt upon this valuable *dépôt*, they would at a single blow have annihilated the British navy for the ensuing year. In calling the attention of the House to the operations of the fleet, I must apologize for the mistakes which a person who is no professional man is apt to commit, and I hope the gentlemen will set me right. Admiral Colpoys was stationed off Brest. Upon the 15th of December the French fleet contrived to get out of port. While Admiral Colpoys continued upon this station, the Toulon squadron came round and entered Brest. Richery too returned from his predatory expedition, and got in unmolested. Upon the 15th then the French left Brest; upon the 20th they appeared upon the Irish coasts, and upon the 24th anchored in Bantry Bay, and continued to insult the coasts of Ireland without interruption from the 18th December, to the 6th January. On the 20th
December

December news arrived that the French fleet had sailed; upon the 19th Lord Bridport hoisted his flag: upon the 21st the wind was favourable; upon the 25th the wind was fair, but his Lordship stopped at St. Helen's. The wind continued fair the 26th and 27th, it then changed, and upon the 30th Jan. Lord Bridport sailed. Upon the 31st the news that the French were upon the coast of Ireland was received, and the same day Admiral Colpoys arrived at Spithead. Admiral Colpoys did not pursue the enemy's fleet, but returned to Spithead with a wind that would have likewise carried him into Bantry Bay. Various reasons have been suggested for this conduct. It cannot be said that he was obliged to return on account of inferiority in point of force. After the brilliant achievement of Sir John Jervis over such superiority of numbers, it will not be said that fourteen ships of the line were not a match for sixteen French ships of the line? But were this even admitted, is it an excuse for the first Lord of the Admiralty that this squadron was not sufficient? On the contrary, is it not a ground of impeachment against him if such was the fact, when it was his duty to have kept an adequate force on that station? But it has been said too, that Admiral Colpoys' fleet was short of provisions and water. But this too forms another article of impeachment against the first Lord of the Admiralty. That the fleet was unable to keep the sea, and was obliged to run home for fear of being starved, is itself the heaviest charge that can be urged against Administration. Why were ships not gradually sent out to relieve those that were obliged to return home, or why was the squadron allowed to leave that important station till the arrival of another? Admiral Colpoys then arrived upon the very day the French anchored in Bantry Bay. Admiral Elphinstone had arrived at Crookhaven in a ship of war, and gave notice of his arrival at Dublin castle. Admiral Kingmill sent some frigates to co-operate with him, but instead of remaining there, Admiral Elphinstone arrived at Spithead, and upon the 3d of January Lord Bridport sailed, so that all these different forces rendezvoused at Spithead before means were taken to defeat the design which the enemy attempted to put into execution. I do not mean to blame the course which the gallant Admiral Lord Bridport thought proper to follow, but, after proceeding to Brest, and thence to Bantry, he returned to Spithead upon the 3d of February, without seeing the enemy's fleet, without striking a single blow to satisfy the people of Ireland and the people of En-

land for the insult they had suffered, and the danger they had undergone. These, then, are the grounds upon which I conceive it to be my duty to propose this enquiry. I am aware of the objections which Administration have been in use to urge against such motions as this. The inconvenience to public business to produce the necessary documents, the impossibility sometimes of examining at the bar the officers whose evidence it may be necessary to take. Last year a motion for enquiry was made by my right honourable friend (Mr. Fox), of which the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) was a strenuous supporter, and moved for several papers upon the subject. Upon the present occasion I hope he will assist to facilitate the enquiry. With regard to the possibility of obtaining the testimonies of those officers whom it may be necessary to examine, last Friday almost all of them were in town, and several may still be upon the spot. At all events those who are present may be examined in the first place, and the rest upon some future occasion. I shall not trouble the House farther with any arguments to show the propriety of the proposed enquiry. I shall conclude, therefore, Sir, in the words of one of your predecessors, addressed to the Throne upon an occasion of great importance in the year 1744, "that it would be unpardonable in the House not to exercise its undoubted privileges, and to enquire into every part of our public situation." I therefore move, that a Committee be appointed to enquire into the conduct of Ministers with regard to the late attempt of invasion against Ireland.

Mr. Dundas said, I am very glad the honourable gentleman has brought forward the discussion of this important circumstance in the manner he has done, because it has afforded me an opportunity of examining the subject in a regular way, and as I trust, of refuting at the same time the various, ill-founded reports and misrepresentations which have been since industriously circulated about it. The mode which I intend to adopt as the most clear, satisfactory, and convincing, will be by troubling the House with a short and simple narrative of facts. But before I proceed to do that, it is necessary for me to dismiss the various topics from the recollection of the House with which the honourable gentleman has introduced his proposed enquiry into the circumstances attending the menaced invasion of Ireland by the enemy. I beg to be understood, however, that in discussing the prefatory matter which the honourable gentleman has connected with the subject of his enquiry, I never wish to banish from my mind the brilliant and memorable victory of Sir John Jervis, whatever may have been the

the nature of his situation in that victory, because it was that situation which had so supereminently added, by its contrast, to his glory. Let that situation, however, be what it might, there was no misconduct in the Admiralty, nor was any blame thereby to be imputed to it, as I trust I shall presently evince. The honourable gentleman has inculpated the Admiralty for not allowing Sir John Jervis a larger force, and a force more adequate to that of the enemy, which he defeated. If after the statement I am about to make, to remove that inculpation, the honourable gentleman still finds any solid reason to accuse the Admiralty, he may bring his accusations forward at a proper time. But the honourable gentleman has certainly been misinformed when he undertook to say that Sir John Jervis had only fifteen sail of the line upon that station, for his actual appointment consisted of twenty sail of the line, besides frigates, which, with the knowledge of his skill and bravery, and the zeal and ardour of the sailors under his command, might be deemed equal to any force which he would probably have to contend with. But it is to be recollected, that out of this allotted number he left two behind him at Lisbon, in consequence of accidents upon the bar there, two more in the Straights of Gibraltar, and another he sent home. If he had retained his whole complement, therefore, he would have had twenty sail of the line in all, besides frigates. It was, moreover the intention of the Admiralty, just before the arrival of the glorious news which they have this day received, to have sent him a further reinforcement of five sail of the line, which ships I believe are now ready, or very nearly ready for their destination. So whatever might have been the force of a fleet, either French or Spanish, in the Mediterranean or the Straights of Gibraltar, I trust no person had ever heard Sir John Jervis say he should not be a match for them. Besides, I furthermore hope the honourable gentleman, and the House, will be pleased to admit that no culpability can attach to the Admiralty for suffering Sir John Jervis to remain upon that station with only fifteen sail of the line, inasmuch as they have previously heard that he was not sought for and pursued by the enemy, but on the contrary as I have before stated, that he sought, pursued, and conquered the enemy, and was consequently not only conscious of, but proved the strength and capability of the forces he commanded. Nevertheless, if this be not satisfactory to the House, and to the honourable gentleman, I shall be very willing at a future opportunity to give a further explanation. I now come distinctly to the discussion of the question itself, which I acknowledge to have been moved by the honourable gentleman

gentleman in a very honourable, and a very proper manner. Upon this point I call for the attention of the House, and undertake upon the ground where I now stand, not to leave a particle of doubt in the mind of any man who hears me, that the smallest blame was imputable either to the civil or military departments respecting the force engaged in that transaction. I am sensible that I am talking in bold language, and therefore shall demand, not as a favour but as a right, that gentlemen will dismiss every kind of prejudice from their minds and listen to me with attention. The honourable gentleman has stated, that we were obliged to the elements for the dispersion of the enemy's fleet upon the Irish coast. It is so far true, indeed, that we were obliged to the elements, but let it be remembered also on the other hand, that to the elements, and the elements only, the French have been indebted for every part of that expedition. To prove this assertion, I shall not have occasion to go far back, in point of date. Only there is one difficulty to contend with, in the admission of which, I trust there will be but one sentiment, namely, the possibility of laying before the House all the documents which Government is possessed of. If that were to be done, there would immediately be an end to the safety of the public service, and to the safety of every individual. Does any gentleman doubt it? I think it is impossible; and I shall therefore enter that as a general proposition; I say, a general proposition, and not as one which I purposely desire to make available now, for screening any misconduct from enquiry. My reason for doing so is plain, when I declare, that I have no hesitation in saying, as I hope and trust no gentleman will have any hesitation in agreeing with me, that although prior to the sailing of the French fleet from Brest, the Admiralty had received intelligence that such a fleet was in preparation, it was not positively known whether it was intended to sail against Portugal or Ireland, or some part of the British dominions. Sometimes it was rumoured to be intended against Gibraltar, and at others it was suspected to be prepared for an attack upon some of our more distant possessions. The Admiralty, however, had credible belief that either Portugal or Ireland was the object of its destination, and no man I conjecture, however authentic his information might be, would have been bold to decide that which did not take place was not the most probable. There are obvious reasons, which it would be very indiscreet in me to publish, why an invasion of Portugal did not take place. I shall, therefore, proceed to determine whether Ministers adopted such measures as the nature of circumstances seemed to require? I assert that they took
the

the properest and best possible measures which could be taken with their uncertainty of the enemy's designs; for it is to be observed, that they had not only to watch the hostile armaments of the enemy, and provide a sufficient force in every quarter, which they deemed assailable to resist them, but they were compelled moreover to provide a large and adequate force at the same time for the protection of our outward and homeward bound fleets. Let Gentlemen separate these three circumstances, and they will act wisely, for the proper way to consider it is, not as an abstract but a complex question; and since the consideration of every question must depend upon the circumstances which surround it, the enquiry will then be, whether or not the best measures under the consideration of all the circumstances were adopted. In reply to this, I have no hesitation now to say, that Government thought it the wisest plan to separate the fleets into different divisions. One fleet was stationed off Brest to watch the enemy, and intercept the sailing of the expedition, and another fleet was stationed at home to relieve the fleet off Brest, if necessary, or to pursue the enemy if it should sail, or attend to any exigencies which might possibly arise. This was surely the wisest and most effectual arrangement which the uncertainty of the enemy's intentions could possibly admit. The fleet off Brest, under the command of Admiral Thompson, was put under the command of Admiral Colpoys on the 9th of October; and here I shall beg leave to read a copy of the orders issued from the Admiralty to Admiral Thompson, from whom Admiral Colpoys received his instructions. [Mr. Dundas read the orders alluded to.] For the sake of impressing these orders more forcibly upon the attention of the House, I shall beg leave to recapitulate the substance of them. Admiral Colpoys was to take care of a partial disposition of the British fleet under his command off Brest, in case of a dispersion of the enemy in sailing from that port. He was to hover about their coast, and watch over them till they did sail; and, provided they steered to the southward, he was immediately to dispatch a cutter to Admiral Vandeput, at Lisbon, to give communication of the same; or provided they steered to the northward, he was to dispatch a cutter to Admiral Kingmill, at Cork, at the same time taking care to give the earliest intelligence at home. Surely it was impossible to select any orders in preference to these; at least, I cannot imagine that, considering all the circumstances of the case, any better could have been adopted.

I must now correct a statement which has gone abroad, that

ou

no frigate nor squadron was appointed by the Admiralty to watch over the preparations of the enemy in Brest harbour, and give an account of the same to Admiral Colpoys, as circumstances should require. For it is a positive fact that Sir Edward Pellew was appointed, and did actually cruize in Brest harbour. He was there the very day the armament was in motion; he was there the very day it failed too; and he conveyed to Admiral Colpoy's look-out ship, the Marlborough, an account of their progress and their sailing, and he sent a further intelligence of the loss of one of the enemy's ships (*Les Droits de l'Homme*) in coming out of the harbour. So it appears that what ought to have been done was done. But, notwithstanding the diligence, intelligence, and skill of Admiral Colpoys; and notwithstanding the experience, courage, and ability of Sir Edward Pellew, their exertions were in vain. Though Sir Edward Pellew sent off intelligence that the enemy sailed on the 16th, it was not till the 24th of December that the look-out ship, the Marlborough, received the account of it. For the state of the weather was such, that it was impossible for Admiral Colpoys even to keep his own fleet under his observation, and the air was so hazy and so foggy, that the fog guns were continually fired. How then does this explanation stand? Has any man a doubt of Sir Edward Pellew's inclination and ability, if possible, to have given the intelligence to Admiral Colpoys that the enemy had put to sea? Or has any man a doubt that Admiral Colpoys was not desirous to receive it? He could not be unwilling to receive it, because he had a superior force to the enemy under his command. He had four three-deckers, and the enemy had not one. If there was one spark of fire in their dispositions therefore, or one drop of British blood in their veins, both Sir Edward Pellew and Admiral Colpoys must have been anxious to intercept the enemy, and have suffered great regret in their disappointment. I do not know Admiral Colpoys personally, but I know him by character to be an able and a virtuous man, and he who is a virtuous man will also be a gallant man. I have heard from the best authority, that no man could suffer more torture in his mind than that brave Admiral did during the six days in which he was cut off from all intelligence of the enemy; and I am confident that during all that time it was not for want of exertion, gallantry, or ability, that Sir Edward Pellew was not able to apprise him of their situation. Yet with all the known ability, gallantry, and exertion of both officers, it was the 24th of December before the news of the sailing of the enemy reached Admiral Colpoys' squadron. What must have

have been his situation, if he had met them on the 17th, encumbered with troops and transports, without one three-decker, while he had four, and possessing neither the discipline, the skill, the gallantry, nor zeal, of the forces under his command? I have no more to do than to ask the House, whether, burning with ardour and ambition as they were, the most glorious achievements might not have been expected? In this moment of exultation, I am certainly entitled to some credit when I speak thus confidently of two officers of known ability, gallantry, and exertion. With regard to the enemy's sailing, the House is now in the real possession of the case; but so uncertain were both the officers alluded to of the meaning of the enemy's intention, that both Sir Edward Pellew and Admiral Colpoys believed they were undoubtedly destined for Portugal, and Sir Edward Pellew sent off to Admiral Vandeput, at Lisbon, to give him notice thereof. But Admiral Colpoys knowing, for the first time on the 24th of December, that the enemy had sailed on the 16th, and there having been a hurricane on the 17th, he believed the French ships might have been dispersed in the storm, and regulated his conduct accordingly. He thought it the wisest resolution not to follow them to Portugal or Ireland, because he was uncertain of their destination, and he therefore kept his station, on account of the chance of interrupting the return of all or part of the fleet in case of a dispersion by the storm. He recollected also, that the circumstance of the enemy's having sailed would be known by the Admiralty, and that by keeping his station he should have the means of receiving such authentic intelligence as he could not otherwise expect. If he was not able to keep his station, by the prevalence of the South-West winds off Brest, he was to rendezvous off the Lizard Point; and, therefore, by keeping as closely upon his station as he possibly could, he was provided for both alternatives, either for that of intercepting the enemy's fleet on the return of the whole or part to Brest, or of receiving such an account of them from the Admiralty as might enable him to pursue them. Accordingly, being unable to keep his station off Brest, the fleet returned to the Lizard Point, in hopes of receiving some information, and was soon driven up Channel by the gales of wind, while the French found their way home in the mean time, though the hurricane still blew. Now no man can say this was not the wisest and best measure which could be adopted; for Admiral Colpoys was either to say, "Shall I remain here contending against a hurricane, with the danger of disabling the ships entrusted to my command, and thereby render them incapable

of engaging with the enemy if I should happen to fall in with them; or shall I get into the nearest ports where I may obtain shelter, and from which, if the winds be favourable, there can be little difference in point of time for sailing." The last was certainly the best and wisest resolution, and it reflected no discredit on the Admiral for chusing it. So far, with regard to the nature of Admiral Colpoys' orders, and the propriety of his discretion, I think I have shewn that both were proper. The next charge which the honourable Gentleman made, and which he stated as a cause of the return of Admiral Colpoys' fleet to port, was the want of provision. I am ready to admit that his squadron remained longer on its station than was originally supposed necessary, and that it was not relieved so soon as the Admiralty intended. But to explain this matter with clearness and satisfaction, I must entreat the attention of the House, or I shall not be able to make Gentlemen understand it as they ought. I repeat, that I am ready to admit the squadron stationed off Brest was not relieved so soon as the Admiralty had intended; and if I am asked why, I will explain the reason. Sir Roger Curtis should have been in port at the beginning of November, but did not return till the 18th. The reason of his delay was, that he had been appointed to cruize off Rochefort, where he remained a fortnight longer than was at first thought necessary, to intercept the return of Richery's squadron from Newfoundland. Sir Roger Curtis's squadron consisted of seven sail of the line, which, soon after their return to port, were to have been sent to the relief of the fleet off Brest, but the wind was so adverse as to render it impossible for them to come to Spithead before the 18th of November, and that was the real cause why the fleet off Brest was not relieved as soon as was intended. When I say this, however, or that Admiral Colpoys was unable to pursue the French fleet, I desire to have it understood, that I do not doubt he would have pursued the French to Portugal, or Ireland, if he had been certain of their destination; and I really believe, that his continuing on his station proceeded from no deficiency of provision, but from a want of knowing the course the enemy had taken, and from the prevalence of the adverse winds which had forced him off his station, and driven him up Channel.

Upon examination, I have found that there was on board the fleet under admiral Colpoys's command, wine and spirits for 42 days, peas and oatmeal for 36 days, biscuits for seven weeks, beef for six weeks, pork for seven weeks, and water for 34 days. [Some of the gentlemen from the opposite side enquired

enquired what the quantity of wood and coals was.] I do not see any account of wood and coals, but I cannot suppose they were comparatively less. I am perfectly well apprised how speedily reports of this nature are propagated, and how very erroneous they generally are, for some short time ago it was rumoured in the City, that the Powerful man of war, which lately put into Cork, was one of the ships belonging to this station, and that at the time she put into Cork, she had only three or four days water on board.—Whereas she went to sea, victualled for foreign service, but came into port disabled by great stress of weather, having water and provisions on board at the same time to last a six months voyage. I beg that this single instance may be received as a proof of what sort of reliance may be placed upon such rumours, for it is certain that admiral Colpoys did not return to port on account of an absolute want of provision, but because he was not able to pursue the enemy from the uncertainty of their course, and because he was driven by violent gales of wind up Channel. I now come to the next stage of the hon. gentleman's observations, which is the interval between the arrival of admiral Colpoys, and the sailing of Lord Bridport on the 31st of December. Sir Edward Pellew made every exertion in his power, and according to his instructions, sent an account to the Admiralty immediately of the sailing of the French fleet. This account reached the Admiralty on the 28th of December, and I will now shew, by reading a copy of the Admiralty orders, sent off immediately upon the receipt of that intelligence to Lord Bridport, whether there was any deficiency on the part of the Admiralty of making the most prompt and vigorous exertions. I should observe, that previous to the receipt of this intelligence on the 19th of December Lord Bridport hoisted his flag on board his own ship to prepare for the relief of admiral Colpoys off Brest. Lord Bridport received information on the morning of the 21st of December from the Admiralty of the sailing of the French fleet from Brest, and immediately returned for answer, that all the fleet would be ready four days after, namely on the 25th of December. [*Mr. Dundas read the orders of the Admiralty, issued to Lord Bridport on the 21st, and another issued two days after, counteracting some part of the first orders, and desiring him to proceed off Cape Clear immediately.*] As I wish to impress these orders strongly upon the recollection of the House, I shall follow the mode I before adopted in stating the orders issued

to admiral Colpoys, and recapitulate them. Lord Bridport, by the orders of the 21st, is required and directed to put to sea without any loss of time, to drop down Channel, and call at Plymouth for the *Raisonable* to join admiral Colpoys upon his station, and take his ships, if he did not fall in with the enemy, to make a show off Brest; if he found none there, to proceed off Cape Clear; and then, provided he could get no information, to return again to Brest, by way of intercepting them on their return. The orders of the 23d, however, in addition to the others, required and directed Lord Bridport, if the *Raisonable* was not ready, to join his squadron, to proceed immediately without her, to make a show off Brest; and if he received any information of the enemy off Ireland, to make Cape Clear his chief object. Lord Bridport having received these orders on the 25th, weighed anchor and went down Channel, but it so happened from the eagerness and zeal of all the crews that an accident took place in getting out of port, and one or two of the ships ran foul of each other, by which means the *Prince* was damaged and prevented from proceeding with the squadron, but the other ship gave signal that she was ready, and so there was no worse effect from this accident than the disabling one vessel. This happened on the 25th, and notwithstanding what the hon. gentleman had stated, he was either misinformed, or totally mistaken, for from that time subsequently to their sailing, there was not a fair wind. —The wind blew strong at S. E. and there was a high-flowing tide operating equally adverse against them, so much so, that after every exertion it was simply impossible for them to reach St. Helens on the 26th or 27th. (*Some gentlemen on the opposite side appeared to discredit the impossibility of getting down Channel with a S. E. wind.*) Gentlemen need not throw out their signals, for they must soon take them down again. I have a letter in my hand from Sir Peter Parker, the port-admiral at Plymouth, dated the 26th, which states, that such a hard gale was blowing at S. E. as to prevent any communication with the fleet, and the master shipwright had informed him that he was not able in consequence to send any body off on board the *Prince*. Another letter from the same port-admiral, dated the 27th, states that the West-India convoy was not able to sail on account of the S. E. winds, nor could the *Sans Pareille*, the *Formidable*, the *Mars*, the *Prince George*, the *Valiant* and *Colossus* join the admiral and the other eight ships belonging to the fleet
at

at St. Helen's. On the 28th, another letter from the same port admiral states, that the Eurydice had arrived with strong easterly winds, and that although all the six ships mentioned in his former letter had attempted to join Lord Bridport at St. Helens, the Colossus and the Valiant were the only ships able to do so. A letter from Lord Bridport himself dated the 28th of December, mentions, that Sir Peter Parker had communicated orders by the telegraph for him to sail without the Prince, which was to go into dock again to be repaired; and he concludes by stating, that the winds are still against him. On this subject, therefore, I fancy I am able to offer a little naval knowledge, as well as the hon. gentleman. I have the authority of Lord Bridport himself and six British officers struggling for glory, in addition to that of the port-admiral, besides two commanders of frigates, that the wind would not suffer them to proceed down Channel; and I do not know what can be more satisfactory than ten such positive evidences. I have not named the officers, because I am pretty well persuaded the House will agree with me that not one of them would require more than one signal to sail on such an occasion. The impossibility therefore of the fleet's getting out to sea is, I trust, put beyond any further disputation. Now if the case be as I have stated, it will bring the question to a short compass. It may possibly be agitated in another shape, and since it is evident that Lord Bridport had reached St. Helens with eight sail of the line, it may be asked why he waited for the other six, and why under such circumstances he did not immediately proceed with those eight? Let those who put such questions accidentally to themselves or to their neighbours, recollect that neither Lord Bridport, nor the Admiralty, at that time, had the smallest intelligence of the enemy's being in Bantry Bay: nor had they any certain idea of their destination. Is there a man, who knows the character of the gallant admiral in question, who would even suspect him from any motives of being negligent or tardy, when danger calls for his exertion. His great fault, if it be a fault, is an over-ardour. He is as incapable of loitering behind in the hour of peril, as he is of sinking his own ship to the bottom of the sea. Besides, he had reason to expect, that admiral Colpoys was watching the enemy, nor did the matter rest there, for it could not be expected that Lord Bridport should sail with only eight out of 16 sail of the line, when he had no idea of the strength or number of the enemy's

enemy's fleet, and when the next tide was likely to bring him down six such capital ships as those above-mentioned. Lord Bridport is as arduous and sanguine as any man; but such a proceeding would have betrayed a want of intelligence and judgment, which no ardour, no confidence, no zeal, no bravery, and no circumstances could justify. So far then I have stated in clear, distinct, and as I hope and trust in satisfactory evidence, also, that neither the Admiralty had been remiss in any point of public duty, in giving proper orders, nor Lord Bridport, or any other officers in zeal or duty, to carry those orders into execution.—Though the French fleet arrived off the coast of Ireland upon the 21st of December, no intelligence was received of them in this country till the 31st. I have stated what the orders were which were sent from the Admiralty to Lord Bridport, immediately upon receiving the intelligence that the enemy had sailed from Brest; and I must now state, that the Admiralty took the chance of sending to admiral Colpoys on the station where they expected to find him off the Lizard, in case of any adverse winds removing him from the French coast. Lord Bridport has hitherto been not only a gallant but a fortunate admiral, and yet it so happened that although admiral Colpoys had been hovering with his squadron off Brest to intercept the enemy upon their leaving that harbour; although Lord Bridport afterwards proceeded off Cape Clear and the Irish coast to intercept them on their return; and although the Duke and the Majestic, with two other ships of war, were sent in search of them, that they were so covered by the fog and fortune, as to escape them all. Still however they did not so escape as not to suffer for their temerity, for they lost in this rash expedition two ships, four frigates, one corvette, and four transports, besides 4 or 5000 men, which, unless to men who do not value lives, and are absolutely driven to despair, does not afford any thing very tempting to hazard another storm. I believe I have now answered, if not controverted, most of the facts which the honourable Gentleman has stated, and the result of my discussion is, that not a single article of blame is imputable to the Admiralty for the neglect of giving orders, nor any culpability to the conduct of the officers in the execution of them. There have been some disappointments in the failure I confess. I, for one, exulted in the prospect, and if I have suffered some chagrin from the disappointment, I speedily banished it from my mind, because I knew

knew no blame was to be attributed to any one. The honourable Gentleman said that Ireland was saved by the elements, but he should have remembered the same wind which dispersed the enemy, prevented our interception of them. If ever any enterprize could prove the folly of invading Ireland, that must have done it; if any expedition could prove the necessity of a superior fleet than what they had for such an undertaking, that must have done it, and if ever there were a concurrence of miracles it surely was at that period. If Lord Bridport had met them, could any man entertain a doubt of their destruction? The honourable Gentleman seemed to think, that when a great hostile armament invaded any country, the business is done. I must tell him, the difficulties are but just begun. An enemy requires a superior fleet on such occasions to cover their debarkation, which is always done with panic and confusion, else they are likely to have their provisions cut off and other necessaries. So far therefore from laying aside confidence in our naval affairs, I wish to continue it, but not at the expence of a blind and indiscreet security. If there were one chance in a hundred, the enemy have had the benefit of that chance, which never may recur again, I hope any man who hears me, or communicates with any person out of doors, will never again admit a spirit of despondency. Let them lay aside all such childish dismay, which unnerves both the body and the soul, and annihilates the strength and energy of the country. Exclusive of our naval forces in the East and West Indies, the North Seas and the Mediterranean, we have fifty sail of the line for the defence of Great Britain and Ireland, and upwards of two hundred thousand men under arms, invasion therefore is nothing but a bug-bear, yet I would not have men relax in their precautions on one hand, nor would I have them despond on the other. Thus far I trust then that the government and force of this country have been libelled and calumniated. I do not wish to prevent enquiry, but, upon a full consideration of the documents, I think the honourable Gentleman will not find himself warranted to persist in his motion, because I trust he is satisfied that no blame is imputable to the Admiralty or officers; I shall therefore move the previous question, in order to move for the production of those papers, that gentlemen after perusing them, may examine whether the aspersions be well founded. Mr. Dundas then moved the previous question.

Mr.

Mr. Grey said that after the very long statement which the right honourable Gentleman who had just spoken had given to the House, and which he doubtless thought himself obliged to give, he should be sorry to detain the House longer than appeared to him to be absolutely necessary in taking notice of what the right honourable Gentleman had stated, especially at so late a period of the night. He said this both on account of what he felt for the House and for himself, he being obliged to attend at an early hour the next day, upon public business of very great importance, (the Committee on the affairs of the Bank.) He felt it impossible, however, to abstain from following the right honourable Gentleman in some parts of his statements upon this subject. That right honourable Gentleman had concluded a very long speech with an apology for having taken up so much of the time of the House. He felt the necessity of that apology, for he had, in the course of his speech, taken notice of the Cavalry and Supplemental Militia acts, and he had spoken on the unreasonableness of our being alarmed at the prospect of an invasion under all our present circumstances. This part of the speech of the right honourable Gentleman would not, upon a superficial view of it, appear to be very closely connected with the question that was now before the House. But he thought he could see the meaning of introducing at this time these seemingly unconnected ideas; although there was no seeming connection in the arguments that arose out of those topics and the subject now to be debated, yet there was a connection between them and the sentiments of Ministers, and it made part of their system. Ministers had for a long time laboured to create an alarm in that House and in the country. They had so far succeeded in that system of alarm as to have the confidence of a majority of Parliament, who upon all occasions during this war had uniformly voted against any enquiry into their conduct; they had abused that confidence so much, and had brought this country into a state so deplorable, that even their most confidential friends and adherents, began to shake off the delusion under which they had acted, and began at last to speak of the necessity of enquiry. How far those gentlemen were sincere in this new tone, would be seen by their votes. But Ministers now began to be alarmed themselves, that was, for their own safety, and therefore to restore confidence again to their adherents, they found it politic to do away the alarm which they had themselves created. This was the key to
the

the mystery of Ministers having changed their tone. The right hon. gentleman, therefore, was perfectly consistent in his conduct, it had all the use he intended, and now that he found he was likely to meet with a little more mischief than he wished from the system of alarm, was desirous of suppressing it, and therefore he complained of its effects. He ended his speech with an extraordinary figure of rhetoric, and very beautiful language, saying that the idea of an invasion by the enemy, while we have a fleet so superior to theirs, was a thing not within the compass of a credible belief. That he should have been an advocate against the danger of alarm would have been a wonderful thing, if his motives were not easily comprehended. It was not, in truth, alarm that he dreaded, it was the direction which the alarm had taken that produced this change in his language. While the country was alarmed it suited his purpose well enough, and therefore he propagated that alarm, because it produced confidence in the executive government, but when that alarm was such as to make his adherents think it necessary to have an enquiry into the conduct of administration which produced that alarm, it became necessary to do it away as soon as possible, for an enquiry was what Ministers would shun at all events. That right hon. gentleman had accused his opponents with having been inconsistent in their conduct, in now making so serious an object of an invasion, when it was well known that while Ministers called upon Parliament to make provision against it, they treated the idea as a bugbear. Indeed they were disposed to treat it as a bugbear under the idea that our fleet was to be well managed, but when they saw it was scandalously mismanaged, the idea of an invasion became a very serious thing. Such was the case upon the subject which was now before the House. It was under the idea that our fleets would be well managed that they had opposed the Cavalry and Supplementary Militia bills; they in that view thought them useless. He even still thought the Cavalry bill, not useless merely, but something worse than useless, because it was the cause of a vast expence without the least possible utility. But, to pursue the idea of the bugbear of which the right hon. gentleman had said so much, he believed his honourable friends never applied that epithet to the idea of an invasion of Ireland, which was the place that had been attacked. In the place where an attack of the enemy was apprehended, and where it was made, there was neither a Cavalry nor a Supplemental Militia bill; in the

place where there was no apprehension of it there was a Supplemental Militia bill and a Cavalry act. The place against which no attack was apprehended was to be defended in an extraordinary manner; the place that was likely to be attacked was left entirely defenceless; and he would say, that the enemy not having obtained a footing in Ireland was not owing to the wisdom of his Majesty's councils, but to the interposition of Providence.

A great part of the right hon. gentleman's speech referred to the fleet under the command of Sir John Jervis, of whose brilliant victory no man thought more highly than he did, and in praise of whom it was impossible to say too much; but he must join his honourable friend in saying that notwithstanding the glorious event that had taken place under the command of that illustrious admiral, yet his Majesty's Ministers were highly to blame in leaving him with a force apparently so inferior to the enemy, with whom he had to contend. In the brilliancy of that most glorious victory, administration had no share, and he believed that when the opinion of that gallant admiral was known, the public would be convinced that administration had been negligent as to him as well as others. He supported his assertion by a reference to the force that admiral had, the manner in which he had not been, but ought to have been reinforced, the station he was in, and the facility with which he might have been reinforced, &c. and then proceeded to take a view of the manner in which the Admiralty had neglected to equip Lord Bridport, and the fleet under his command, for the coast of Ireland, at the time when the French came into Bantry Bay. He said he expected that the Admiralty would have laid the whole of their conduct before the House upon this occasion; that those who defended the conduct of Lord Spencer would have met this enquiry in a full and fair manner; that they would have laid all the documents that related to this transaction before the House, instead of which the right hon. gentleman produced those parts only which had been garbled, and selected for the purpose of defending the Admiralty, suppressing all those documents which would have put the case in its clear light; he made a speech upon them, as if they contained all the documents which belonged to the subject, and then triumphantly called for the approbation of the House, upon the conduct of the Admiralty. This was a modern mode of meeting an accusation, but he preferred the old fashioned mode of the whole of the documents being

ing laid upon the table, and then considering the subject from such documents. But by this practice it was impossible to know how to get at every thing that was wanted. In all this complication, he was intitled to say this, that with respect to the affair of Bantry-Bay, there was blame somewhere. He observed that when any disaster or failure happened, it was generally imputed by his Majesty's Ministers to the fogs, and adverse winds. Were this defence set up but once, it might deserve some attention; but when a similar excuse was made in every attempt that failed, surely, a continued series of failures argued on the very face of it, remissness and neglect. Thus at the beginning of the war, it had been proposed to starve France by blockading its ports; but, lo! a French squadron returns loaded with provisions from America, and not a ship was found to oppose them. Another fleet of the enemy retook Guadaloupe and St. Lucia; a third squadron destroyed the valuable fishery of Newfoundland; another squadron swept the coast of Africa, and nearly annihilated the settlement of Sierra Leone, and now a fresh squadron had menaced, unmolested, the coast of Ireland. All these instances shewed that blame attached somewhere. The right hon. gentleman had produced a document to prove that admiral Colpoys's squadron was in no want of provision, and he particularly specified the Powerful, which could be in no want on its return to Cork, having been provisioned for six months. He said, he had heard it reported that the fleet was in want of fuel, and he wished to know of one hon. admiral, whom he saw in his place, (Lord H. Seymour) whether the ships might not be so reduced for want of water, as to be obliged to return on that account, though there might be no want of provisions. The right honourable Secretary had stated, that on the 22d of December, instructions had been sent to Lord Bridport to put to sea immediately; why did he not do so when the wind was fair, on the 22d or 23d, and 24th and 25th? It was no excuse to say, that this squadron was not ready, or that admiral Sir R. Curtis had not returned from his cruise. He thought the Admiralty ought to be impeached for not having a fleet ready to act on the 22d. By the neglects of administration, Mr. Grey imputed it that the enemy's fleet remained fourteen days off the coast of Ireland unmolested, and had they not met with bad weather, nothing would have prevented them from striking a blow, and making themselves masters of Cork in two days after landing, and thus

have destroyed twelve months provisions and stores for the navy. There was no adequate force in that part of Ireland to oppose the enemy. The honourable gentleman seemed to think the French expedition a fortunate event, as it had proved the loyalty of that part of Ireland; their loyalty was indeed meritorious, in proportion to the few obligations which the people of Ireland were under to its government. He condemned the restrictions of the Catholics, and insisted that nothing could add more to the discontents of Ireland, than the neglects which the people of that country had met with from administration.

The *Secretary at War* acknowledged that general grounds of presumption of neglect were a sufficient cause for enquiry; the honourable gentleman was perfectly warranted in the motion he had made, and the country in wishing to receive satisfaction. Still, however, the grounds on which such an enquiry was to proceed ought to be substantiated. The honourable gentleman had acknowledged the propriety of the instructions, given to admiral Colpoys, but he blames the conduct which the admiral pursued when he heard that the French fleet sailed from Brest. This would go to blame the admiral; but the Secretary at War insisted, there was no blame at all, and he well knew that the object of the motion was not to criminate the admiral, and, therefore, he little doubted, but that, if the gentlemen in Opposition pursued the blame to that point, they would feel no desire to run their game any farther. Mr. Windham proceeded to vindicate the conduct of the Admiralty; and shewed how impossible it was to keep a fleet for any length of time in such a state of preparation as to be ready to sail at a moment's warning. When government knew nothing but that the French fleet was out with sixteen sail, it would have been extreme rashness to have sent Lord Bridport out with only eight sail, and till he was joined at St. Helen's by the rest of his squadron. With respect to the affairs of Ireland, that was a delicate subject; he wished that the language used by gentlemen on the other side might not tend to hold out encouragement to the enemy, and to cherish discontents in that country. They were making use of a two-edged sword, which might produce a real evil before it could effect any cure. He said it was worthy of notice, that the very class of men who had been described as the most aggrieved, were they, whose example had exhibited a pattern of zeal and loyalty, when the enemy was off the coast, and whose conduct

duct would bear eulogium; and he thought it strange that the discontents should prevail more in the North, amongst those who had not the same grievances to complain of, than amongst the Catholics in the South.

Mr. Fox said, Sir, I shall do what may seem to be somewhat irregular, begin with the last part of the right honourable Gentleman's speech who has just sat down; with that state and profligate argument of his, always used against those who oppose the measures of Administration; that when they charge Ministers with neglecting the defence of the country, they are to be considered as holding out an invitation to the enemy to attempt an invasion. If that be true, Sir, we had better at once put an end to the forms as we have done to the substance of the Constitution. If that be true, we had better leave every thing to his Majesty's Ministers, and, instead of making members take the oath of transubstantiation, let no man come into the House who will not previously declare that he will never, in any war, say any thing against the conduct of the executive government. The right honourable gentleman has talked of "two edged tools:" in a state of war every complaint against Administration must be in the nature of a two-edged tool. If I complain that one part of the country is weak, I may be told—take care, you are doing that which is dangerous, you are communicating to the enemy which is the least defensible point of the empire. To whom then am I to make the complaint? To whom am I to state my opinion? I wish to know whether Ministers are the only persons to be permitted to give advice? Sir, I will state what my opinion has been with respect to an invasion; and though the right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) went in a manner out of his way to reproach me, I will again state, that if Ministers were really alarmed for the safety of Ireland, I cannot, upon any possible ground, account for their conduct. From that statement I do not recede; nay, I will say further, that if they are apprehensive of any fresh danger to Ireland, their conduct is little less than insanity. I am sorry, Sir, I was in any way the means of preventing an honourable friend of mine from delivering his sentiments before me on the state of the sister kingdom; he is better informed than I can be supposed to be; but I have dear connections, whose property is not partly in this kingdom, and partly in that, but wholly in Ireland. When I speak of Ireland, therefore, I may be imagined to speak with some degree of feeling; and if what I hear be true, that country is at this moment more discontented than she was before the attempt at an invasion. I suppose I shall now be told,

told, that I am holding out an invitation to the French. No, Sir, I am not inviting them. I am inviting his Majesty's Ministers to take measures to remove that discontent, and to remedy the grievances complained of. But we find that Ireland is divided into two parts, the contented and discontented. Upon that subject we shall hear more in future. But let not the right honourable Gentleman who spoke last state his opinion as our own. I have said, that the Catholics were in a state of unjust exclusion; but I never said that the Protestants had no reason for complaint, or that they were not excluded from the essence and substance of the British Constitution. I do conceive the North, the South, the West, and the Eastern part of Ireland to be in such a situation, that, if a speedy remedy is not applied, the Minister will not do justice to the British empire. But the right honourable gentleman, if there is any logic in his statement, means to say, that it is a common way with us to exclaim, Make the people happy, by taking away their grievances! If he had said that we made use of an argument that was self-evident, and had complained of us on that account, it might have been well; but he says this, "May not men have unreasonable grounds of complaint?" To this I answer, yes; but that is no reason for not removing their reasonable complaints. Does the Secretary at War then mean to contend, that to relieve Ireland the whole country should be put in a state of oppression? The North, he says, wants nothing, and is disloyal. The South wants every thing, and is still loyal. Here, I suppose, the Gentleman means to put this paradox, and say, that we had better place all Ireland and England in the same state in which the Catholics in the South of Ireland are, and that then we may expect universal loyalty. I should have thought, that when the right honourable member was attempting to prove that Ireland had no cause for complaint, he would have explained why proclamations were issuing daily, for declaring parts of the kingdom out of the King's peace. For my own part, I firmly believe that the grievances of which Ireland complains, are real, deep, well-founded. But whether they are so or not, we hear that the people in the South are loyal; yet all the reward they get for their royalty, is not a redress of grievances, not a removal of disabilities, not a cessation of exclusions. No, Sir, the reward they get is barren praise, a barren testimony to their loyalty; but that they have no more to expect than those in the North, who are represented to be of a very different description. I certainly do admire the loyalty that was shewn by the people of Ireland upon the late invasion,

vasion, and I should have thought that, by liberal and enlightened minds, that loyalty would have been deemed an unanswerable reason for giving the people, without delay, those privileges to which they are entitled by justice. No such project, however, has been yet adopted, and that country remains in the same state in which it was at the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. He left them, after having had the authority of Government for tantalizing their expectations, and the cup of happiness was on a sudden dashed from their lips. What may be the opinion of the right honourable gentleman, I know not; but this I do know, that if there was no reason in the time of Lord Fitzwilliam for removing the grievances complained of, the loyalty that has since been shewn is at least hardly requited, if it is to be brought only as an argument to shew that the people are not discontented. And upon the subject of grievances, what do the Gentlemen of Ireland state? There are in that country men of as great respectability, and of as high abilities as any in this. Will the right honourable Gentleman say, that those who supported Lord Fitzwilliam are inclined to those Jacobinical principles of which we have so often been accused? Will he, because they did for a time give into the alarm that was raised and supported the war, will he call them Jacobins? Look to these men! look to the name of Grattan! of whom I shall never speak but with respect, and who, I am sure, will never err on the side on which we are said to err. Look at these men, and then let the right honourable Gentleman say whether Ireland has no grievances. There is another point which that gentleman might have gone into, and I watched him narrowly, to see whether he would. It is this; he has denied that, if the enemy had landed at Bantry Bay, there was a probability of Cork falling into their hands! Has he denied this? Let us institute an enquiry into the fact. He will not deny it. Will he say, in excuse, that it is impossible to guard every part of the empire? Shall we then forget that, on the 26th of October last, we were told of an invasion; and when we came to discuss the subject in March, we find that no part of the empire has been protected. And here I cannot help remarking upon what the right honourable Gentleman, in hopes of undoing the alarm excited before Christmas, says to us. What, he asks, can you say, who always treated the idea of an invasion as a bugbear? Sir, I never did so treat the idea when applied to Ireland. But there is in the argument of the Secretary at War a whimsical inconsistency. He is saying, how can we be invaded, with a superior fleet; and this at a time when the subject of enquiry

is how the enemy came to invade us? For one I think, while we have a fleet which is not, as it has been in the late expedition of the French, mismanaged, that an invasion with respect to Great Britain is not an evil of the first magnitude. This I dare say now, under the wing of the honourable Gentleman, though it will be remembered by the House, that when I said so before, I was rebuked, as if I was a person not properly feeling for my country. I conceive, however, that an invasion would be an evil comparatively small, as long as we have a superior fleet. This leads me more particularly to the present argument. The right honourable Gentleman says, that though there are many chances against an invasion while we have such a fleet; yet if there be only chance in favour of it, it is right to be upon our guard. Agreed. But there is no way in which we could have been so much harrassed as by the mode that has been adopted. Let Gentlemen apply the argument to the naval force, and see how far it will go. A fleet was kept off Brest, and it was probable that the French fleet might not escape. But ought we not to have had a second fleet at home, to have intercepted the enemy in case they had made their escape? This is the important part of the discussion. I am not expressing any dissatisfaction at the conduct of Admiral Colpys' fleet. I am only contending, that we ought to have had a second fleet in Portsmouth, ready to sail as soon as possible. We come now to some ingenious reasoning of the right honourable Gentleman's, and his comparison of ships to post-horses. He says, May we not be too ready? He is afraid of irritating the nerves of ships, for fear of their being like fine post-horses. I have no such apprehensions. But, says he, Can a fleet be ready to sail at an hour's notice? I suppose not. But, at least, it ought to sail as soon as possible. When I create any delay in a land expedition, I know the exact amount of the delay, and that it cannot extend beyond a given period. Upon shore I can calculate, but by sea, where I am subject to sudden changes of wind, it is material for me not to lose a minute, for if I do, I may likely produce a delay of two months. I have heard no satisfactory reply to the charge that Admiral Colpys' fleet was in want of provisions. I am satisfied that the Admiral has done his duty; but the question was, whether he was put into such a situation as might enable him to do his duty with advantage to his country? It was presumed that Government knew more than Admiral Colpys, and therefore they should have ordered him, in case the French fleet got out, to have made Cape Clear, instead of the Lizard, the place of rendezvous. They should also have ordered

dered Lord Bridport to sail immediately either for Brest or Ireland. Every hour of delay from the 20th to the 25th, before Lord Bridport sailed, was a misfortune to the country, and a neglect either of the Ministry or the officers. I request any precedent to be produced on the journals, wherein an enquiry had been evaded on grounds like the present, wherein garbled papers had been produced to prejudge the case. It might be injurious to the reputation of Lord Spencer, as it had been to that of his predecessor, Lord Chatham; for he had a majority of the House of Commons in his favour, when an enquiry was moved for to examine into his conduct, and yet shortly afterwards he was compelled to give up his office of First Lord of the Admiralty.

Mr. *Sturt* complained of the repeated insults offered to our coasts, which of itself ought to justify an enquiry. He asserted that Admiral Colpoys' ship came into port short of provisions, particularly fuel, which was as bad as any want, for he did not think the right honourable Gentleman would like raw beef any more than the sailors. He was astonished at nothing which that Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) asserted, he had so much boldness, confidence and assurance. His whole account of the safety of Ireland was a mis-statement, and he read a letter he had received from a friend to prove it. He hoped in God's name he would not much longer have the direction of affairs. He might twist and toss his head about; but he hoped it would soon be twisted somewhere else.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* began a long and pointed reply. Mr. Pitt considered the question now to lay within a very narrow compass, and it was easy to decide on it. A very clear and detailed statement had been given by his right honourable friend, which he had no doubt had made a very forcible impression on the House; he had also proposed to have a list of papers printed in support of that statement. If enquiry was the duty of Parliament, it was true, on the other hand, that details should be dispensed with that are useless, and which may be mischievous. The Gentlemen on the other side had been pleased to call these documents garbled and defective extracts, though they did not know their contents. All he wished for was, that they would compare these vouchers on the table with the arguments of his friend, and then decide. With respect to the general question, it was this, whether or not sufficient preparations were made by the Admiralty to be ready against any possible expedition which might be fitted out in the ports of France. It is admitted that either Portugal or Ireland was the point of attack: the one was our faithful ally,

the other was as dear to us as Great Britain itself. What was the nature of our preparation? Why, we had one fleet actually watching the enemy on their coasts, and ready to follow them wherever they might go, in case the weather had permitted that we could have known their direction; and we had another fleet in such a forward state of preparation, as to have been ready to have sailed in five days after we knew that the Brest fleet had sailed, had the wind been fair. Had either one fleet or the other been so fortunate as to have met the enemy, what prodigies of valour might we not have expected? In respect to the navy of Great Britain, it ought to be recollected how many and various objects, and what rich and important possessions it had to protect. This circumstance must lessen our superiority in some points, especially when the enemy had so lately been reinforced by the fleets of Spain. What more could be done than to have one fleet on the French coasts, and another ready for sea? Having no positive information of the destination of the enemy's fleet, occasioned by the mere circumstance of fogs and tempestuous weather, is it extraordinary that we should have been so long in the dark, and unable to find out their place of rendezvous, when the French Admiral and General Hoche, who were in possession of the secret, and sailed in the same expedition, as well as other captains of the fleet, had from the same causes of weather never been able even to join it. Admiral Colpoys' fleet was in a state and condition to follow the enemy, and the papers offered to be produced would prove it. All the letters from Admiral Colpoys were proposed to be given; and in the one written after he first heard that the French fleet had sailed, but before he knew its destination, he said—he should follow them the moment he knew the direction they had steered. Another circumstance which determined him to remain on his station was, his having shortly after chased some ships into Brest, which he conceived to be part of their scattered fleet, and that others would follow; whereas those ships turned out to be part of the Toulon squadron. The weather was so hazy, it was hardly possible to distinguish them, or get a clear observation of their force. Thus far, therefore, there could be no complaint either against the Admiralty or Admiral Colpoys. As to Lord Bridport, his fleet was, on the 20th of December, in such a state of forwardness as to be ready for sea in five days. He had then only eight sail of the line, which dropped down to St. Helen's; but not knowing the destination of the Brest fleet, it was impossible to conceive that the case was so urgent; nor would he have been warranted in sailing only with eight ships

ships, when six more were just ready, and the French had seventeen fail. When these ships were ready, the wind was foul. On the subject of alarms which had been abroad, and the accusation brought against him as having been the first to spread them, and the first to lament the direction they had taken, he should shortly observe, that he had wished to put Gentlemen on their guard against any attempts which the enemy might make, and accordingly he had recommended great exertions in the country. There was much at stake, and accordingly it was necessary to be prepared by land and sea. He never had a doubt of the spirit of the country, or that having taken the necessary precautions, we were not fully able to defend ourselves. His had been the language of precaution, and not of alarm. Mr. Pitt concluded his speech by complaining of Mr. Fox's violent and inflammatory language respecting the state of Ireland, and especially of the Catholics, who had had more indulgences granted them within the few last years than they ever had before. So far was it from being true, that they had been oppressed by the present Government.

Mr. *Fox* and Mr. *Whitbread* replied, and at length the House divided.

<i>Ayes</i> , (For the previous question)	—	200
<i>Noes</i> , (Against it)	—	62
<i>Majority</i>	—	147

Adjourned at four o'clock this morning.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *March 6.*

The Earl of *Chatham* presented the report of the secret Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the Bank.

The report states the situation of the Bank precisely as given in the report to the House of Commons. The Committee, in addition to this statement, give as their opinion, that the Order of Council ought to be continued and confirmed. As the cause of the drain of cash which the Bank had for some time experienced, and especially upon the last days of the week previous to the Order being issued, the Committee assign the extraordinary demand from the country.—The report was ordered to be printed.

An Order of Council was presented by Lord Chatham, by which it is recommended to the Bank to issue fifty thousand guineas to the bankers, for the purpose of supplying cash in cases where it is particularly necessary.

THANKS TO SIR JOHN JERVIS.

Earl *Spencer* said, he rose in consequence of a notice he had given upon Friday, to submit to the House a motion, from which he derived the utmost satisfaction, and in which he did not entertain a doubt of their Lordships unanimous concurrence. It was not necessary for him to go at length into the circumstances on which this motion was founded. He should only remind the House of the brilliant and glorious victory which had been achieved by Sir John Jervis. Of the high character of that gallant officer, he begged leave to say a few words. Sensible of the high honour which was conferred by the thanks of that dignified assembly, he was particularly happy on this occasion to bring forward the motion with which he meant to conclude, but he should be wanting to the duty he owed to the merit of Sir John Jervis if he confined himself to a consideration of the brilliant victory which he had obtained, nor would he attempt to add to the impression which the account of the gallant Admiral himself had already made on the public. He would state what was less known to the public in detail, viz. that his unremitting exertions, his indefatigable activity, judicious management, and meritorious conduct during the whole war, were as conspicuous as the glorious events with which they had been crowned was unparalleled. His conduct, to the very last, was such as to stamp him one of the greatest commanders which this country had ever produced. His conduct, indeed, had made a great impression upon Ministers, and was reported to his Majesty, where it met with that reception which such merit must always experience. Whatever might have been the former views entertained of distinguishing Sir John Jervis, it remained only for an achievement so brilliant and glorious as his late victory over the Spanish fleet to add to them, and bring them to a splendid climax. He thought it unnecessary to say more. He was convinced that the hearts and voices of the House would be in favour of the motion which he was going to propose. The decision, the judgment, the ability of the gallant commander had been equally conspicuous. The superior force with which he had to contend, and the whole conduct displayed on that memorable day,

day, marked the victory as an exploit perhaps unparalleled in the history of this country. He believed it was unparalleled, and he was sure it never could be surpassed. So filled with admiration was he at the contemplation of the gallantry and skill of the Admiral in his late action, that he was at a loss for words sufficiently strong to express the high sense he entertained, but indeed they spoke sufficiently for themselves, as no words could do them justice. He would therefore detain their Lordships no longer, but would conclude with moving, "That the thanks of this House be given to Admiral Sir John Jervis, Knight of the Bath, for his able and gallant conduct in the most brilliant and decisive victory gained over the Spanish fleet on the 14th of February, by the fleet under his command."

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he agreed with the noble Earl that it was impossible to expatiate upon the subject of the glorious victory obtained by Sir John Jervis, in such a manner as to add to the impression which every one felt; it was indeed an exploit unparalleled in the annals of this country. He thought that even some more signal mark of the high sense entertained of the merit of Sir John Jervis ought to be given, at the same time, he could easily conceive that Ministers might perhaps be so circumstanced that they might feel some delicacy in bringing forward any motion to that effect. He would suggest only, however, that upon an occasion so distinguished as the present, it would not be going too far to address his Majesty to confer some mark of his royal favour upon Sir John Jervis. He should leave to Ministers to bring forward any proposition of this tendency if they thought proper.

The Duke of *Clarence* said, he rose to express those feelings of joy which he experienced in common with every Englishman upon the glorious victory gained by Sir John Jervis. The chief reason, however, of his rising at present was, that he had expected that some brother officer would have risen to pay the tribute of praise to the character of the gallant Admiral, to whom they were called upon to return their thanks. From the private friendship which had long subsisted between Sir John Jervis and himself, he could not help troubling their Lordships with a few observations upon this action. On this point the noble Earl had declined speaking, and to this particular, he begged leave to say a few words. He had examined into the naval history of this country, and found that in most of the victories obtained by the
fleets

fleets of England, we were either nearly equal, or superior in number; at the battle of La Hogue the French fleet was superior to ours in number. The circumstances of the present action, the great difference of force, fifteen sail against twenty seven, spoke of themselves. Admiral Boscawen, in 1757, destroyed the French fleet; in 1780, Admiral Rodney, with whom he himself had served in a very inferior situation, had destroyed the Spanish fleet, but here the superiority in force was so greatly in favour of the enemy, that it was distinguished as the most brilliant victory in the naval history of this country, and the most decided proof of the courage and vigour of our seamen ever exhibited. There was one expression in the letter of Sir John Jervis, of which he should take notice. It was that in which he says "the fleet which I have the *happiness* to command." It was remarkable, that in the private letters that had been received upon the subject of this victory, the officers expressed the happiness they have in serving under the most able officer in the British navy. Upon every occasion previous to this event, the conduct of Sir John Jervis had been conspicuous. In 1790, at the time of the Spanish armament, Lord Howe testified his high sense of the activity and talents of Sir John Jervis, and of the state and discipline of the fleet, when he received it from his hands. He himself had been on board the fleet at that time, and the discipline kept up was most exemplary, and redounded greatly to the advantage of the navy, and of the service. Indeed, from the whole of his conduct, he did not hesitate to pronounce, that Sir John Jervis was the best officer in his majesty's navy. With regard to the consequences of this action, he should say a few words. He should state it as his opinion, that while this country preserved its naval superiority there was no danger of invasion, no cause for alarm of any kind. After the proper measures of defence especially which Ministers had taken, he thought there was nothing to be apprehended. Difficulties there were in our present situation, but these arose from the particular nature of the contest in which we were engaged, with an enemy who stuck at nothing, which rendered some sacrifices on our part necessary. He was convinced, however, that in a few months a safe and permanent peace would crown our exertions. Any other peace than a peace that would not last for ten or twelve years, was not desirable. There was something particular in the situation of this country which ought to be attended to,
and

and which in contemplation of peace ought to be particularly regarded. From motives of economy, a Minister, at the conclusion of a war, was obliged to disband the army, and dismantle the fleet. In its present situation, our force was at its height. To raise it to this situation was a matter of slow progress, and it was fair to expect from our exertions, when it was attained, that peace which we desired, and on the restoration of which the prosperity of the country would resume its accustomed vigour.

Earl *Spencer* said, that with regard to the idea of addressing his Majesty as suggested by the noble Duke, it was not usual on occasions of marking the sense the House entertained of the meritorious conduct of officers in his Majesty's service, who had distinguished themselves by signal victories, to take a step of that nature, and indeed obvious motives of delicacy presented themselves to his mind to shew that it would not be proper, as it was impossible to conceive that the supreme branch of the legislature, did not feel in common with their Lordships and the country in general a due sense of the value, importance and glory of Sir John Jervis's victory, and the brilliancy of that gallant admiral's conduct, and their Lordships must agree that something should be left to the spontaneous exercise of grace in that quarter, which the constitution had vested with the high prerogative of conferring honours and dignities.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he did not wish to press his Majesty's Ministers on the subject of addressing his Majesty in the manner that he had suggested, but if Ministers would not move any thing tending to affix a particular mark of distinction upon the achievement of Sir John Jervis, he should bring forward some proposition which would shew upon the Journals the high sense of public gratitude which he had excited, and which he truly merited, because not only the British fleet had been greatly inferior in number, but he had been assured by letters from those competent to decide, that in number of guns the Spanish fleet more than doubled those on board the British fleet. At present he was inclined to amend the motion which had been made, and to insert some words expressive of the superiority of the force with which Sir John Jervis had contended. He suggested, therefore, that the words, "so greatly superior in number," should be inserted after the words "Spanish fleet."

Earl *Spencer* said, he had no objection to insert any words that

that could give strength to the expression of the merit of the exploit, which the motion was meant to convey.

The *Lord Chancellor* submitted to the House, whether the general statement of the exploit under the terms "gallant and decisive victory," was not sufficient, and whether enumeration and specification would not rather serve to detract than to heighten; and to evince a bad taste in the selection of expressions to form the motion.

Earl *Spencer* thought that the insertion of the words would not certainly strengthen the general sentiment; but as they had been suggested, he thought they had better be allowed to stand part of the motion.

Lord *Hood* said, that he could not content himself with giving a silent vote on the present occasion. Neither the history of this country nor any other could produce an instance of greater magnanimity, or more profound judgment and professional skill than had been exhibited by Sir John Jervis in the late brilliant engagement. It seemed as if Sir John Jervis had been apprized of the gloom which had seized upon the public mind, and which it required some eminent exploit to dispel. This Sir John Jervis in circumstances which justified the stake, had risked his well-earned fame to achieve, and departing from the established system, had attempted an enterprize in which through unexampled bravery and singular ability, he had eminently succeeded, an enterprize to which, by every consideration of policy, he was impelled. He himself knew most of the ships, which from the number of killed and wounded seemed to have been principally engaged in the action, and could bear testimony to the excellence of their discipline, and the courage and merit of their officers, having had the honour to command them. He wondered not therefore that their behaviour was such as he could have expected. He had nothing more to add, but that he gave his most cordial assent to the motion.

The Earl of *Guilford* said, that it was not his intention to create any debate upon the present subject; but he wished the words suggested by the noble Duke to be inserted, because they expressed with additional force, the high sense the House entertained of the conduct of Sir John Jervis. After what they had heard, that the achievements which were celebrated in our naval history, were performed against equal or inferior force, while the difference of force on the present occasion was so unexampled; when they heard from the royal

royal Duke who had borne his testimony as a brother officer to the extraordinary merit of Sir John Jervis, and when they had also heard from the noble Lord who had just sat down, and every thing that came from him came with additional weight and authority, on account of his own high professional character, but when their Lordships had heard from him the risks with which the action had been attended, that it was a stake for the salvation of the country ; when they considered the possibility of failure, they would feel the propriety of marking in the strongest manner the superiority of this exploit. The noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty had said, that it could never be surpassed ; he hoped, however, that the noble Earl would never allow the chance again to occur. He hoped he would be careful how in future he allowed 13 sail to be opposed to 27, for the consequence of failure was dreadful to contemplate. He had as much confidence as any man in our navy ; but would the noble Earl say that he could have hoped for an event so successful. He trusted therefore that the Admiralty would never in future suffer a British fleet again to risque such fearful odds, but take care, that their numbers in point of ships were at least equal to those of the enemy. He thought therefore that the thanks of the House ought to be given to Sir John Jervis in the most decided manner.

Earl *pencer* said, he could not help saying a few words in reply to the noble Earl, who had imposed on him a degree of responsibility, beyond that ever before imposed on a first Lord of the Admiralty. It was impossible for him or for any public man to undertake to controul events which must be created by the circumstances of war. Was he to undertake that it should never occur that an inferior squadron should meet with a superior fleet of the enemy ? Surely such an idea could only have originated in the noble Lord's imagination, heated and dazzled by the consideration of the brilliant victory to which their attention was directed. It was the object of his exertion, that the commanders and fleets should be supplied with every thing necessary ; but it was impossible to engage for events.

The *Lord Chancellor* said, that he hoped the House would do him the justice to believe, that he objected to the insertion of the words proposed, not with a view to detract from the importance, lessen the value, or diminish the lustre of Sir John Jervis's conduct on the late glorious occasion, but solely on the ground that it would weaken, instead of strengthen,

the expression. It appeared to him to be altogether a matter of taste. Simplicity was considered as the best taste of inscription. In mere view of propriety, enumeration and specification tended to detract. The victory of Blenheim conveyed as distinctly, and more forcibly to an English ear, the splendour of that exploit, than could be done by an enumeration of particulars. On this point a circumstance occurred to his mind, which would illustrate the matter in question, and shew the opinion of those who were no bad judges in such matters. When Louis XIV. in the height of his power, was desirous to decorate his palaces with paintings of the exploits which had been performed during his reign, from the pencil of the great masters of the art, by way of inscription proposed to be put on each, the different incidents were made out, with an enumeration of most of the particular circumstances in which they had taken place. Before they were exposed to the public they were submitted to Racine (no bad judge of the sublime, the simple, and the beautiful), and to Desperaux. These consulted together, and rejected the detail, and substituted the simple words, Battle of Cremona, &c. &c. Upon this ground, on mere taste of propriety, he considered the motion as it stood preferable. He was against the insertion of the words too, as the object of them seemed to impute blame to another quarter. The mention of one particular too would infer, that the merit consisted chiefly there, while in fact the merit was composed of a great many other circumstances of which that was only one.

The Earl of *Carlisle* deprecated the present conversation. He owned, he was not at all convinced by the arguments of the noble Lord on the woofsack. The comparison of an inscription was not in point, for they were not going to erect a pyramid or an obelisk to Sir John Jervis. The additional words did not appear to him to refer to any other person, or to depreciate the merit of others. The words, he thought, should therefore be inserted.

Lord *Grenville* said, that he thought, with the noble and learned Lord on the woofsack, the original words stronger; but, after the words had been mentioned, if it was the sense of the House that the insertion of those proposed would strengthen the expression, he had no objection, and should rather think it adviseable to adopt almost any words than give room for the appearance of a difference of opinion taking place on such a subject. He was not insensible that the words might be termed an imputation of blame to another quarter, but as that discussion might be regularly before the House, he forbore

forbore saying any thing till then. He could not, however, assent to the idea that a British squadron was never to venture out but when superior to the enemy. Such an idea was so degrading in itself, and so injurious to the valour and skill of the gallant officers, who, in so many instances during the war, had eminently distinguished themselves against a superior force, that it was not to be endured for a single moment. It would also have this further mischievous consequence, it would raise the spirits of the enemy, and produce a very bad effect upon the country at the present moment. He was for adopting any form of words rather than admitting a supposition that they were not sensible of the great talents and gallantry displayed by Sir John Jervis.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, that it was never in his contemplation that the words implied any charge against the Admiralty. Certainly he did not mean to compliment the Admiralty upon the occasion. Though he was far from wishing to degrade the navy, he did not wish that such hazards should be run; and though he never dreamt of saying that our force should be always superior, it was not a necessary consequence that they should engage on such extraordinary inequality. It was evident, however, from what had fallen from the noble Lord (Hood), that he was of opinion that such risks should not happen often.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that he by no means intended the words as a charge against Administration. He differed still from the noble Lord on the woolfack. He confessed that he had a bad taste; for, after the noble Lord's disquisition upon taste, he could not discover that it was a good taste to impute sinister motives to those whose conduct gave no countenance to the charge.

Lord *Sydney* paid many high compliments to Sir John Jervis, and admitted the eminence of the exploit he had performed, but he thought it rather invidious to seem to hold all other services as cheap.

Lord *Borrington* disagreed with the noble Lord on the woolfack, for, upon the same principle, they might expunge the epithets "able and gallant." He thought the words proposed added strength to the expression. The force of the enemy was double that of Sir John Jervis, at least in guns, and he thought the mention of that fact, or the words proposed, should be inserted.

Earl *Spencer* proposed the words "very superior force," which were agreed to, and the motion passed *nem. diss.*

Earl *Spencer* then moved the Thanks of the House to the Admirals Thompson, Waldegrave, Parker, Nelson, Sir Robert Calder, and the other officers. He said that distinctions ought not to be made in the mention of the names of these officers; they had all behaved with the utmost gallantry. The conduct of Commodore Nelson had been very conspicuous on a variety of occasions.

The Duke of *Norfolk* thought it unusual to specify the names, as it appeared invidious.

Earl *Spencer* said, the motion, he believed, was drawn up in the manner usual on such occasions.

The Duke of *Clarence* said, that the names of the different officers had been enumerated on the occasion of the victory of the 1st of June, and Lord Rodney's victory in 1782. He wished the noble Duke to wave his objections; which the Duke of *Norfolk*, in compliance with the disposition of the House, readily did, and the motion passed *nem. diss.*

The Duke of *Bedford* said, it would come best from Ministers to move an Address to his Majesty, that he would be pleased to confer some mark of his royal approbation on Sir John Jervis. He was desirous that such an address should be moved; but he should forbear if he should stand single, that it might not appear on the journals that such a motion had been so feebly supported.

Earl *Spencer* repeated his observation, that his Majesty should have an opportunity of exercising his own discretion in such a case, without seeming to act merely from the address of the House. He thought the noble Duke ought not to push such a motion.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he did not wish to encroach on the prerogatives of the King, but he was desirous of bringing forward such an address from the experience of the conduct of Ministers on other occasions. The victory of the first of June had been of the highest importance, and produced the greatest sensation, though the person, whose merits the country felt and wished to see rewarded, had been overlooked by Ministers.

The Earl of *Suffolk* said that he should make a motion on this subject the first open day.

Earl *Spencer* moved the acknowledgment of the House of the good conduct and bravery of the marines, seamen, and soldiers, on board the fleet under the command of Sir John Jervis, &c. which was agreed to *nem. diss.*

NOTICES.

The Earl of *Albemarle* rose to give notice of a motion for Thursday, to enquire into the naval defence of Ireland on the late attempt of invasion.

Earl *Moir* wished it postponed till Friday, on account of a Navigation Bill, which had been postponed, coming on upon Thursday. Friday was then fixed.

Earl *Spencer* said, that he had intended to move for a number of papers relative to that subject, which he conceived were necessary to enable the House to judge. He wished anxiously for a discussion of the subject.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said that these papers could not be printed before Friday, in time for discussion. It would not do to produce a garbled set of papers, on which to found a defence. The House would not endure it. A later day should be fixed, to give time to move for farther documents, if necessary.

Earl *Spencer* wished the noble Lord had waited to read the papers before he had pronounced them garbled.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, that he merely admonished the noble Earl not to attempt to impose upon the House by a garbled selection, as his friends had done in another place. The House ought not to endure it. Such a defence could not be sustained.

Earl *Spencer* was sorry to see the warmth of the noble Earl, as he wished to see the subject dispassionately discussed. All the papers would be laid upon the table that could be made public with propriety. When the subject came before them he trusted for a candid examination. To the judgment of the House he should submit; but, upon his honour, he could say, that were the things to be done again, he should pursue the very same measures which had formerly been adopted. He concluded with moving for a variety of papers.

The Earl of *Albemarle* put off his motion till Monday, because the papers produced could not be printed before Friday.

COMMITTEE OF ENQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE ORDER OF COUNCIL OF THE 26TH OF FEBRUARY.

The order of the day for their Lordships being summoned being read,

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that the subject of the motion, of which he had given notice, was of such importance, that he was afraid he could not express his feelings upon it so as to command the attention of their Lordships. Since the Order in Council of the 26th of February was issued, he had endeavoured to consider it in the most favourable light possible, but
he

he confessed that, in every point of view, he was alarmed at its tendency. They had appointed a Committee to enquire into the necessity of continuing this Order, and he hoped that this would not be urged as an argument against the appointment of another Committee to investigate the causes of its being issued. In his opinion the appointment of the former Committee proved to the House, and to the world, the expediency of farther enquiry. If in any thing he should mistake the report, he hoped to be corrected. He understood, however, that an Order in Council had been issued, requiring the Bank not to pay their notes in specie. A Committee had been appointed, in consequence of the alarm created by this Order, to enquire into the circumstances of the Bank, and the necessity of continuing this Order. From the report it appeared that this Committee had strictly confined themselves to the task assigned them; and that they had not entered into any investigation of the causes in which the necessity originated. Their Lordships would perceive that there was a material difference between sanctioning the continuance of the Order and approving of its being issued; for the Bank might have been brought into such a disreputable situation, in consequence of the Order, that it might have become dangerous to repeal it, though there was no necessity at first for issuing it. The report of the Committee was favourable to the state of the general affairs of the Bank, which rendered it still more necessary for their Lordships to enquire into the causes why such a novel, unprecedented, and dangerous measure had been adopted by Government. It was highly important that the country should know whether the present embarrassments had been occasioned by the misconduct of Administration, or the inevitable misfortunes of the times. He should abstain from quoting the strong declarations of Ministers respecting the financial state of the country in the course of the war. It was unnecessary to have recourse to such a mode of illustration to convince the House of the critical nature of the present conjuncture of affairs, for every noble Lord must be sensible of it. It had been ascribed to exaggerated alarms of invasion, obtaining in the country, but he could not bring himself to believe that a few Frenchmen landing on the coast of Wales could give rise to such an alarming and eventful crisis. He was afraid that it had rather been produced by the misconduct of the King's Ministers, and the situation to which the country had been reduced by that misconduct. Without entering at all into the question of the justice and policy of the war, it would be allowed, on all hands, that it had been conducted with considerable

rable profusion. The resources of the country had been highly talked of, and they deserved to be so, for they had lasted longer than even the most sanguine could have hoped. But that was no reason why they should last for ever, and far less ought it to supersede the necessity of enquiring into the present state of our finances, especially since they had exhibited such fatal symptoms of rapid decay, if not of total failure. Some time ago the Minister had raised a loan by subscription to a considerable amount, and we had no doubt that at that time he might have raised a far greater sum. His not doing it, therefore, could only be accounted for from his not wanting more at the time, or from his being afraid to avow it on account of the additional taxes which it would have required to be imposed upon the people to defray the interest, at a time when the nation was already groaning under a load of burthens which required all its strength and all its patience to support. Or if neither of these conclusions were just, the only other that could possibly be drawn was, that Ministers, since that time, had launched forth upon such a scale of expence, as had far exceeded the estimates that they had made. But the necessity of enquiry was so obvious to every one, that it required no arguments to enforce it. Hoping, therefore, that there would be but one opinion upon the expediency of instituting an enquiry, he should say a few words on the mode of proceeding. A Committee of the whole House, he was aware, would be attended with considerable inconvenience, as it might occasion delay in a proceeding which ought certainly to be carried on with the utmost possible dispatch. That the enquiry, therefore, might be gone through with expedition, he should propose, that a select Committee of their Lordships be appointed. He had some objections to a secret Committee, but they were not so strong as they were on a former evening, for he then supposed, what he now understood was not the fact, that they were bound to secrecy. He still, however, had considerable objections to that sort of Committee; because he was of opinion, that, in order to restore the confidence of the nation, if there was any ground still remaining for confidence, the greatest publicity ought to be given to its proceedings. Besides, the House (it was very well known) delegated a considerable portion of its power to a Secret Committee, whereas, in the present circumstances, he was of opinion, that it ought to watch the operations of its Committee, and direct its proceedings as it might judge proper. But whether the Committee was secret, or only select, it ought certainly to be openly appointed; for every one was aware, that when a Committee

was

was chosen by ballot, it was commonly composed of the Minister's friends, who certainly were not the most impartial judges of his conduct. Having made these few observations he had little more to add. He had purposely abstained from entering into any invective against Ministers, because whatever he might feel respecting their conduct, though perhaps it was not altogether irrelevant to the subject, it certainly was not necessary to his argument. If the finances of the country were in a state of embarrassment, it certainly was their duty to enquire into the causes of that embarrassment. If it proceeded from the misconduct of Ministers, there should be a change of men. If it was occasioned by any error in the system pursued by the Bank Directors, that system ought to be altered. But if their Lordships refused to enter into the enquiry both of men and measures, they might be compelled by a power which they would not be able to resist, but to which they would not wish to bow. His Grace moved, "That a Select Committee of fifteen Peers be appointed to enquire into the causes for issuing the Order in Council of the 26th of February last."

Lord *Grenville* expressed his satisfaction at the moderate tone in which the noble Duke had opened the debate, and said he could have no wish to alter that tone, but would endeavour to imitate the candour of the noble Duke. If he agreed to the motion of the noble Duke, however, he begged it might not be inferred that he acquiesced in the conclusions he had drawn; conclusions not warranted by the premises stated, and wholly unfounded in principle and in fact. The noble Duke had thrown out an insinuation, that the country was come to an end of its resources. He must positively deny the assertion: he was confident that the resources of the country would be found upon enquiry to be unimpaired; and all he was anxious about was, that that House and the public should not give way to despondency, and distrust the means of independence, of which they were still largely in possession. Were their Lordships to withdraw from him any part of that confidence with which they had honoured him, he should, no doubt, feel it severely, but he should feel infinitely greater pain were they to lose their confidence in British spirit and British resource. He would therefore venture to state it as his opinion, and he was sanguine in the hopes of its being confirmed by the result of an enquiry, that the present difficulties had arisen not from any decay of actual resource, but merely from a temporary deficiency of circulating medium, which was often mistaken for a deficiency of property. A circulating medium he explained to
be

be the means of bringing resource into action, for the purposes of society, and he denied that it was any test of the wealth, either of an individual or of a state. Many inferior branches of commerce, their Lordships must be aware, required a much greater circulating medium than other branches in which a greater capital was employed, and the want of a circulating medium never experienced in consequence of the exchange of one commodity for another. He differed with the noble Duke not on the propriety of an enquiry, but in the distinction he made between a Secret and a Select Committee. A Secret Committee, in his opinion, though they did not take an oath of secrecy, were bound by a duty of secrecy not to reveal any thing but by the express consent of the whole Committee. There was another material difference, that a secret Committee was only accessible to the members who composed it. He, therefore, was of opinion, that in the present case a Secret would be preferable to a Select Committee, and that it should be chosen in the same way that Secret Committees always are chosen. He concluded with moving as an amendment, that for *select* the word *secret* should be substituted.

The Duke of Norfolk said, he had no objection to a Secret Committee, if it was openly appointed; but he objected to the mode of choosing a Committee by ballot, because it was very well known that such Committees were composed of the Minister's friends. In the last Committee there were no fewer than three Cabinet Ministers, who were the very persons who signed the Order of Council in question, and two of whom were near relations of the Minister. In a matter of such infinite importance, it was highly necessary that the public mind should be fully satisfied, and when enquiries were conducted in such a way it was impossible that the country could be satisfied. Nor was the report of the other House, which stated that the Bank had upwards of four million more than sufficient to answer all their engagements, sufficiently explicit; it ought to have stated in what funds that four millions consisted. For his own part, the Duke said, he was at a loss to know the object of enquiry.

The Earl of Guildford rose for the purpose of explaining to the noble Duke the object of enquiry. The business of the former Committee was narrowed to an enquiry into the immediate necessity which produced the Order in Council; whereas the purpose of appointing the present Committee was as he conceived to investigate the causes which gave rise

to the necessity; and here it would be of importance to ascertain whether Ministers had not produced the necessity, or to shew that it arose from circumstances over which they had no controul. As the enquiry was meant to restore the public confidence, he was clearly of opinion that the utmost publicity should be given to it, and therefore should have but little satisfaction resulting from the enquiry, if it were to be managed by a Secret Committee.

The Duke of *Bedford* and Lord *Grenville* severally explained themselves, after which a Secret Committee was ordered to be chosen.

Lord *Grenville* then moved, "That the Committee be chosen by ballot."

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he could not allow the present motion to be carried without expressing his strongest and most decided dissent. He had waited in expectation of some other noble Lord rising in his place to oppose it, but as no person had come forward he found himself called upon to express his sentiments upon it, in much stronger terms than he had thought it necessary to employ in discussing the other part of the subject. He might perhaps be called to order in the course of his speech; but though it was his wish to observe the rules of the House, he should speak plainly and without disguise. He knew how our ancestors conducted ballots for Committees, but he knew that as they were now managed the Committees were not fairly chosen. Had any man told him that the last Committee would have consisted of the members of which it was composed, he would have laughed at his ignorance. It might be conceived then what was his surprise when he found that three Cabinet Ministers were on the Committee, and that the other six were Peers who had uniformly voted with Ministers since the beginning of the war. When he said this he did not mean to throw the smallest reflection on any individual member of it, but he must be excused if he thought that they certainly were not the most proper persons for judging of the measures of Ministers; for supposing that they were bad, which they certainly might be, was it to be expected that either they would be very rigorous in their enquiries or severe in their censures? If it was asked, Whether those who were uniformly in the habit of opposing Ministers would have been better judges, or come forward with a more satisfactory report? he had no hesitation in saying that they would, because they would have been more
strict

strict in their investigation, and if they pronounced too harsh a judgment, the House were not obliged to adopt their resolutions. If there was any man who would defend the mode of choosing Committees by ballot, let him look into the glasses and see the lists they contained. One would think that at least, they would have been written, to save appearances, in different hands; but instead of that they might see twenty lists containing the same names, and all written by the same hand. And of what were the lists composed? Of the Cabinet Ministers! Gracious God! appoint men to be judges of their own acts! What purpose could it serve to appoint persons to enquire into the policy of measures, of which they themselves were the authors? After the present ballot, if their Lordships consented to it, they might expect to find one or two more Cabinet Ministers, with a few more of their friends, on the Committee. Were not Ministers ashamed of such conduct! What infatuation was it to attempt to deceive the country by such quackery! Now that they had brought the country to the verge, if not into the gulph of ruin, what were they going to do! To appoint a Committee to enquire into the causes of its being reduced to this dreadful state; and of whom was this Committee to be composed? Of those very men who had been the authors of all its calamities. His Grace concluded a warm and pointed speech, by a solemn invocation to the House not to add insult to injury, by mocking an oppressed and deluded people with holding out to them a confidence which they could not inspire, or a redress which they never intended to grant.

Earl *Fauconberg* rose, and declared he had sat two and twenty years in that House, and never had such an attack made upon him, as that which their Lordships had heard from the noble Duke. Because he had the utmost confidence in the abilities and integrity of his Majesty's Ministers, and had given them support on those grounds, was he accused of lending himself to the institution of a mock enquiry, and in joining in an abuse of the public? He spurned at the imputation and was as little capable of an act so dishonourable, as the noble Duke himself. He had no hesitation to avow, that he put one of the lists complained of into the balloting glass, and he gloried in it. Was he to be denied the privilege of exercising his own judgment, and the right of free agency, because he entertained a different opinion of the conduct of Ministers from that which the noble Duke chose to hold, and to proclaim at all times,

without the least apparent consideration of the state of the country, the difficulties of the moment, or the danger of disseminating accusations of Ministers, founded in mere assertion, and calculated to alarm the public, create distrust, and thereby weaken the hands of the Government, when all good subjects ought to unite to support and strengthen them to the utmost? That the situation of the country was not such as could be wished, he would readily allow: and that the people were heavily taxed, no man could deny, but was the burthen partially imposed? Did not their Lordships, did not every man in the country feel it? But did it become Englishmen to despair and pusillanimously to lay down their arms, when they had every thing at stake? He was persuaded that it was the first object of Ministers to extricate us from our situation, and he hoped and trusted they would speedily succeed. But if noble Lords came down to that House, day after day, and endeavoured to persuade the people they were ruined—if they stated grievances that did not exist, and magnified those that did, they certainly were doing serious injury to the country. He begged the noble Duke to consider, before it was too late, and not unnecessarily to make the people discontented, by such arguments as these. Could any man have more interest in the salvation and prosperity of the country than Ministers? Were they not bound by every tie both as public men and individuals, to save their country? He was sure that object occupied their thoughts, day and night; and he lamented that they were drawn away from more important occupations, by listening to such arguments as had been offered that night. His Lordship said, these were the principles that governed his parliamentary conduct, and he begged that their Lordships would all cordially unite their efforts for the preservation of the country, and if they did, he should not despair of their success.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, the noble Earl had either misunderstood or misrepresented the noble Duke, when he stated the observations the noble Duke had made as a reflection upon the persons who had named the Committee, or those who were chosen to be of it. He had said no such thing; but he had said what he must coincide with the noble Duke in, namely, that it was a mockery to talk of a candid and impartial Committee of Enquiry, when the President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster were chosen to examine and enquire into the conduct of the Secretary of State; in short, every man of common sense must

see

see that it was no enquiry, nor could any Minister think, the country certainly never would think, that his conduct was justified by a report from a Committee selected in that way. This Committee was said to be for the purpose of confirming and continuing the measures adopted in consequence of the present exigency and the Order of Council. The ballot proposed by the noble Duke was certainly for a purpose as necessary for the country to know and be satisfied upon—the causes which had produced that exigency. He was confident the greatest and most alarming cause of all our present exigencies arose from the nature, and still more from the conduct of the war; from the total want of economy in every department of government; and these, he thought, were points that required and ought to be part of the enquiry gone into by a Committee of that House. It had been said that he and those with whom he acted, thought that nothing could save the country but a change of men. Here he must remark that it would be the height of presumption in him, whatever high opinion he might entertain of the persons whose councils were too much neglected, perhaps despised, to suppose that any change could possibly give immediate relief to the country, plunged as it was in a state of unparalleled distress and embarrassment. He agreed with a noble Earl who had said, that it was for the interest of Ministers to act as they had done. But if it was remembered what they had done which they ought not to have done, and what they had left undone which it was their duty to do, however much they may have considered their interest, they had not consulted their honour nor that of the country. On the present occasion what could be worse than the proposed Committee of Enquiry? The most corrupt Ministers, in the worst days of Rome, had only asked to chuse their friends to be their accusers. The enquiry proposed by the noble Duke went to this plain question, upon which the House and the country had a right to a satisfactory answer—whether the embarrassed and alarming state of the country was owing to unavoidable misfortunes, or to the mismanagement and incapacity of Ministers?

Lord *Grenville*, in reply, observed that the Committee to be ballotted for was not to enquire into their conduct, but into the situation of the Bank of England. Since ever that House had been a chamber of Parliament, he did not believe that there had been a Committee of fifteen for a similar purpose chosen by nomination from different parts of the House.

Such

Such a scheme, he thought, presented great and unnecessary confusion. The noble Duke seemed to entertain rather strange ideas of a fair investigation, when he supposed that the way to have a fair report upon the conduct of administration, was, that the inquiry should be made by fifteen noble Lords, who were uniformly hostile to Ministers. Indeed, if there was no other argument against that proposal, he believed the difficulty of finding fifteen Peers in that House, who entertained those sentiments of Ministers, must prevent the expedient. The noble Lord had stated, that this country was reduced to a state of the utmost distress by the misconduct of Ministers; and every misfortune that occurred was, without hesitation, attributed to them.

It would, however, be but fair in those noble Lords to acknowledge, that Ministers had to conduct a contest totally unparalleled in the annals of civilized society, that they were endeavouring to defend the country from the most dreadful evils that could threaten any civilized State. They had already succeeded in defending the country from those evils to which some of the countries in Europe were now a prey, and which still threatened them all. The Ministers had already preserved the vessel of the State, and he hoped they would be able to steer it through all its difficulties. His Lordship called upon the House to consider the important objects that were at stake; and that, whenever any reverse of fortune happened, they would, before they imputed it to the misconduct of Ministers, consider the difficulties they had to encounter, and the nature of the contest they had to maintain.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, noble Lords must have very much mistaken his meaning when they said that he wished the Committee to consist of persons adverse to government. He had only put the case, that of two Committees, the one consisting of the relations, friends, and adherents of the Minister, and the other entirely of noble Lords in avowed opposition to the measures of administration, he believed a report more satisfactory to the public on a subject of that very important nature, was likely to come from a Committee of the latter description, than of the former. He could not be guilty of such foolish presumption, or of such gross flattery to the House as to suppose that any argument used there could have much effect, if not in unison with the wishes of the Ministers; and whether there were fifteen Lords or not who thought of their conduct as he did, certainly he must say, after four years experience, that
it

it was of very little consequence what was said within those walls, except it was sanctioned by Ministerial support.

Lord *Darnley* said, although his mind was not swayed by the present alarms, which for his part, he conceived unfounded, yet that something was necessary to be done to quiet the apprehensions of the people, he therefore thought the enquiry should be impartially made, and the Committee not appointed by ballot.

The Duke of *Norfolk* did the same.

After which the question was put on the Duke of *Bedford's* motion,

<i>Not Contents</i>	—	—	47
<i>Contents</i>	—	—	8
			—
	<i>Majority</i>		39

The Duke of *Norfolk* afterwards moved, "That it be an instruction to the Committee to enquire into and report on the amount of specie advanced by the Bank to the Lords of the Treasury, since the 12th July, 1796."

This paper being on the table, the Duke of *Montrose* said, in the course of debate much had been said of the names and political conduct and characters of those noble Lords, who had been chosen by ballot on the first Committee. From the noble Duke's having moved, that it be an instruction to the Committee "to enquire into and report the amount of the specie advanced by the Bank to the Lords of the Treasury, since the 12th of July, 1796," which was already on the table, it was evident what sort of a report would have come from a Committee constituted, as the other noble Duke had suggested.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that he had omitted one remark, which he hoped he should not be thought singular in stating then—it was, that though members of a Secret Committee were bound not to divulge the detail of the proceedings on their enquiry, yet when called upon in that House, they were at liberty to assign the causes which had induced them to agree in the report made to the House.

Upon the motion of the Earl of *Moir*, the order for taking the petitions of Insolvent Debtors into consideration the next day, was discharged.

The *Lord Chancellor* reminded the House that they were to be in a Committee of Privileges the next day, on the Earl of *Lauderdale's* petition, and that the report of the ballot would not be received till five o'clock.

Adjourned till next day.

HOUSE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *March 6.*

The *Speaker* informed the House that a mistake arose in carrying up a bill to suspend the operation of two acts of the 15th and 17th of his present Majesty, respecting the issuing promissory notes for the payment of small sums of money for a limited time, by accident a clause which had been added to the bill had been left in the office. He stated this to be a case without a precedent, and submitted to the House whether the better mode would not be to send a message, together with the clause, to the bar of the House of Lords, and acquaint their Lordships of the mistake, which the House agreed to, and the mode was adopted accordingly.

A message from the Lords informed the House that their Lordships had passed a bill for relieving William Marquis of Lansdown from certain penalties and disabilities to which he had subjected himself, by having inadvertently voted in the House of Peers without having taken the oaths, &c. required by law.

The bill having been read a first time

The *Speaker* observed, that the standing order of the House required that there should be an interval of three days between the first and the second reading of a private bill, and this came under that description; but the House had the power, and perhaps under the special circumstances of this case would be disposed to dispense with that order—which was done accordingly, and the bill was read a second time.

The *Speaker* then observed, that by the standing order it was required that an interval of eight days should elapse between the second reading and the commitment of the bill, perhaps the House would, for the same reason, dispense with that order also—which they did, and ordered the bill to be committed to a select Committee immediately.

The Committee on the election for Maidstone was postponed to the 27th of April on the motion of Mr. W. Dundas; and that of the Kent election to the 2d of May, on the motion of Mr. Williams.

The third reading of the Land Tax Commissioners Name bill was deferred to that day se'nnight.

HIGH PRICE OF BUTCHERS' MEAT.

Mr. *Mainwaring* said, that, in pursuance of the notice he had given, it became his duty to state to the House some facts

facts which he believed would call for a regulation in the management of the sale of live cattle, which was considered by those who were well acquainted with the subject as the principal cause of the high price of provisions. It would not be necessary for him to consume much of the time of the House; little need be said by him to induce Gentlemen to enter upon the investigation of this matter, as it materially concerned every individual in the country, especially the lower orders, of whom the House of Commons were the united representatives. Late in the last session of the last Parliament, a petition was presented to that House by a body of men calling themselves "Cutting Butchers," complaining of great hardships which they endured in consequence of the practice of engrossing, forestalling, and regrating live cattle, which, they said, were the principal causes of the high price of provisions. The House referred that subject to a Committee. That Committee sat for some time to examine into the allegations of the petition, and a number of witnesses were examined, after which the Committee made a report, and stated the substance of the evidence which was given to them, together with some observations thereon. On account of the lateness of the session, no further proceedings were had upon this subject. It would tire the House if he were to detail the whole matter of the report of that Committee, and therefore he should not do it: but it was material that he should state a few of the facts contained in that report, which was ordered to be printed, and was now on the Journals of the House, so that every member could of course be acquainted with its contents. It appeared by that report that there are a class of persons who are called jobbers, who make it a business to go about the grazing country to the farmers, and to buy up very large quantities of large cattle, which are generally ready for the supply of the metropolis. When the jobber has got the cattle out of the hands of the grazier, they are jobbed again, and are sold from one to the other of these jobbers three or four times over before they fairly come to the London market, and thus these jobbers at last send them to the London market, with a fixed price upon them, contrary to the interest of the grazier, as well as the consumer, for the grazier sells them at the price which they will fetch of the jobber, but the jobbers by this practice get all the live cattle into their hands, and they afterwards fix the price of the market upon these cattle, the consequence of which is, the jobbers have the whole controul of the market

in their own hands. By these practices most enormous sums of money are made by these jobbers, insomuch that one of the witnesses examined before the Committee stated that one of these jobbers cleared the sum of 2000*l.* in the year 1795, for his share of jobbing in oxen. Enormous sums of money are made by the same practice by the jobbing in sheep; large profits are got in this way sometimes in the course of an hour. All that he had hitherto stated referred only to cattle fit for the London market; but this was not all, for these jobbers buy up the lean cattle all over the country, take them to graziers to be fed, and then buy them again, and afterwards set their own price upon them, till they get at last the whole of the cattle of the country out of the hands of the farmers into the hands of the jobbers, and in the instances of the lean cattle, the jobbers get a double profit, for the cattle pass twice through their hands.

Another subject of grievous complaint was that of regrating in the Smithfield market. A number of persons go to this market early, and buy up the cattle there, and merely lead them across the market, and then sell them singly to the butchers, by which in the course of half an hour they make most enormous profit, and thereby enhance the price most prodigiously.

Another grievous subject of complaint was that of forestalling, which was as great an evil as either of the other two; this was the practice of what is called the carcass butcher. He goes ten or twenty miles into the country to meet the great dealers in cattle as they are coming to London, and sometimes buys up one half of the cattle that are intended for market; but they never come to market alive—they are sent to the private slaughter-houses of these carcass butchers; by this the Smithfield market often appears thin of live cattle, by which means again there is an apparent, though no real scarcity, the consequence of which is a very high price of butchers meat.

These were inconveniencies which required remedies. It was clear from this report to which he had referred, that all the witnesses who were examined before the Committee said, that the metropolis might be well supplied but for the practices to which he had alluded, and that when the market appeared thin of cattle, that thinness has been owing to the artifices of these men, and the scarcity was not real. He believed, indeed, that sometimes cattle were sent to market much younger than they ought to be for sale there, but this he

he believed to be chiefly owing to the poverty of those who sent them; that, however, was not the question now to be considered. The question now was, whether there were any practices that necessarily enhance the price of provisions? And whether these practices were improper? If the House thought there were such practices, they ought to devise some means to stop them. There were many other matters in the report, but he thought he had stated enough to entitle him to call upon the House to try to adopt some remedy. Some legislative interference ought, in his opinion, to take place. He was aware he might be told that he had stated only that there were engrossing, forestalling, and regrating, and that there are laws in being against such practices. He allowed that to be, in a great measure, true, but then the mode of carrying such laws into execution was attended with so much difficulty, so much delay and perplexity, so much loss of time and expence, and so many discouraging circumstances altogether, that no individual could be expected to stand sufficiently firm and forward for the public, to enforce these laws so as to bring their enactments into general utility. The time and trouble, the expences of witnesses going before a Grand Jury to find a bill, and afterwards to attend a trial, and the various other inconveniencies which attended a prosecution of this nature were such as to deter an individual from entering upon a measure of this kind in a way sufficiently general to be of public use. Of the magnitude of the evil the House had the opinion of a Committee whose report was before them; and therefore it would be for the House to consider whether some measure or other should not be now adopted. He knew very well that the House would be cautious in coming to any measure that might seem to lay any restrictions upon trade, and that it might be said that in a commercial country like this nothing should be adopted by the legislature that should in any degree cramp the operations of trade; that all speculations in trade should be left to find their own level. He subscribed to that doctrine in a general way, for he thought it a good general doctrine; but when men by artifices contrived to enhance the price of general food, he did conceive it to be the duty of that House to adopt measures by which the price of such articles should be kept as low as possible, because if a man doomed to subsist by his honest industry and labour could not support himself, the conclusion was obvious, he must either become a burthen upon the public, or he must starve; and

while we wished to support our trade, we must not forget that these very labourers are the pillars on which the whole of our prosperity rests; that their labour is the foundation of our trade and commerce. It was therefore the interest, as well as the duty, of Parliament to provide for labourers as well as they could. The Committee had given their opinion upon the complaints which he had briefly stated. They stated it as their opinion, that these practices were the cause of the dearth of provisions. Some of the practices ought to be much better regulated than they are at present, by instituting a power to have summary conviction on those who are guilty, and that some of the practices ought to be altogether abolished. Such was the opinion of the Committee. He felt some difficulty as to the mode which he ought to pursue. He should be glad to move for leave to bring in a Bill for the better preventing of Engrossing, Forestalling, and Regrating; but if that was not regular, he must move for another Committee to enquire into the causes of the high price of provisions, and that they should report their opinion thereupon to the House.

The *Speaker* said, that the House might take the benefit of the information in the report, which had been already made, if they pleased, although it was that of a former Parliament; but it was necessary that the report should be read.

The material parts of the report were read; it is dated the 25th of April last, and is to the effect which Mr. Mainwaring stated.

Mr. *Mainwaring* then moved "for leave to bring in a Bill for the more effectually preventing Forestalling, Engrossing, and Regrating Live Cattle."

Mr. Alderman *Combe* seconded the motion.

Leave was given to bring in the Bill and Mr. Mainwaring and Mr. Alderman Combe were directed to prepare and bring it in.

QUAKERS' RELIEF BILL.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* moved, that the order of the day for going into a Committee on the Bill for Relief to Quakers be read.

Mr. *Pierrepont* said, that although it might seem presumptuous to resist the Bill after the full discussion it had received, he could not in duty decline it; he had given it his entire attention, and the result was, a conviction that it would be attended with the most pernicious consequences; he therefore opposed the motion.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* rose, and in a speech of considerable length,

length, in which he went over the former grounds, endeavoured to convince the House of the policy and justice of the Bill.

The *Solicitor General* declared his intention of opposing the Bill in every stage, because it appeared to him calculated to pick the pockets of one set of men, in order to gratify the pretended scruples of another. He followed Mr. Serjeant Adair through most of his arguments, which he combated, and concluded with giving his vote against the Bill.

The *Master of the Rolls* spoke also against the Bill.

Mr. *Jeffreys* defended the character of the body of people called Quakers from an attack which he conceived had been made upon them by the Solicitor General.

The *Solicitor General* declared, that he had no intention of saying any thing against that body of people; on the contrary, he thought them in general very respectable men.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* spoke in explanation.

The *Attorney General* said, that he at first entertained sentiments in favour of the Bill, but that, upon mature investigation, he was inclined to give it his negative.

Mr. *Hobhouse* spoke in favour of the Bill.

A member, whose name we could not learn, moved, as an amendment, "That the House should resolve itself into a Committee this day six months."

The House divided,

<i>For putting off the Bill</i>	-	28
<i>Against it</i>	-	12

Majority against the Bill 16

The other orders were disposed of, and the House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, *March 7.*

SCOTS PEERS' ELECTION.

Their Lordships, in a Committee of Privileges, heard Mr. C. Moore, as second counsel, in support of the Earl of Lauderdale's Petition. He contended that the titles, through which the Gentleman assuming the title of the Earl of Errol derived his claim, were clearly invalid, and of no effect, on account of their being destitute of those *necessary* and *essential* forms (particularly the immediate royal sanction) required by the ancient constitution of the Scots Peerage; and that in the known records of the kingdom no deed or instrument could be found

found by which that person could *legally* establish his claim to the peerage in question. Mr. Moore quoted, in support of his arguments, the doctrine laid down by those great luminaries of the law, and ornaments of the peerage, the Earls of Hardwicke and Mansfield, in the cases of Sutherland, Cassilis, and Stair; all which, he asserted, clearly were in favour of the inferences, he had drawn from the documents before their Lordships. These fixed and established rules should be considered as the land-marks of the peerage law of Scotland; their observance should be decreed by their Lordships, with a view to the conservation of their own privileges, and to the proper exercise of that part of the regal prerogative.

On Mr. Moore's concluding, the counsel were ordered to withdraw, and the farther consideration of the business was deferred to a future day.

The royal assent was given by commission to the Bill for enabling the East India Company to raise money by increasing their capital stock; to the Bill for relieving William Marquis of Lansdown from certain disabilities; and several other public and private Bills.

Lord Viscount *Sydney* returned from the chamber in which their Lordships ballot, with a list of Peers ballotted as a Committee to enquire into the causes for issuing the Order in Council of the 26th of February last. The following are the names of the Committee :

The Lord President (Earl of Chatham),	The Earl of Bathurst,
The Duke of Bedford,	The Earl of Liverpool,
The Earl of Derby,	Lord Sydney,
The Earl of Westmoreland,	Lord Romney,
The Earl of Winchelsea,	Lord Auckland,
Lord Graham (Duke of Montrose)	Lord Gwydir,
The Earl of Guildford,	Lord De Dunstanville.
The Earl of Hardwick,	

Read a third time and passed the Mutiny Bill.

The Bill for suspending the operation of two acts of the 15th and 17th of the King, relative to issuing notes for the payment of small sums being in a Committee,

The *Lord Chancellor*, after observing that the Bill was brought in by a Gentleman who was extensively conversant with the affairs of manufacturing towns, and upon the necessity of such a Bill upon the present situation of affairs, proceeded to observe, that as these Bills would be issued only to those who knew the drawer, and that as the circulation of them

them must, from their nature, be very limited, and consequently no evil was to be apprehended from them, but as they would be bills payable from one person to the bearer on demand, they could not in their nature be negotiable, and therefore the word negotiable, which had inadvertently been inserted in the Bill, ought to be struck out. He therefore moved, that the word "negotiable" should be erased. Ordered.

The Bill then went through its stages, and was ordered to be carried to the Commons.

The various papers for which the Earl of *Spencer* moved the preceding day, relative to the sailing of Lord Bridport's fleet, were laid before the House, and ordered to be printed.

Adjourned until Thursday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *March 7.*

Mr. *Bramstone* brought up the further report* of the Committee on the state of the Bank, in which the Committee state it to be their opinion, that it is necessary to provide for the continuance and confirmation, for a limited time, of the Order in Council, and they submit to the wisdom of Parliament to determine the time for which such Order should be continued.

The Bill to provide for paying and cloathing the Militia was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Thursday next.

Mr. *W. Dundas* stated, that the description of the parishes in the Bill for raising a number of men for the army and navy in Scotland was defective, and therefore he moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend that act of Parliament.

The act being read, leave was given to bring in a Bill to amend it.

Colonel *Wood* gave notice, that if there should not be other pressing business before the House on the 14th of this month, he should submit a motion on measures to be taken on the state of the defence of this country.

THE TWO REPORTS.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, who had just entered the House, said he understood that the further report of the Com-

* Vide Appendix.

mittee on the affairs of the Bank had been just laid before the House. He was sorry he was absent when the report was brought up, but his absence was unavoidable. He should not now enter at large upon the subject of that report, for that would be unseasonable, especially in so thin a House. He thought it necessary, however, to observe, that both the last and the former report of the Committee, upon this subject, ought to be taken into the consideration of the House with as little delay as possible. He therefore should wish to move, that both reports should be taken into consideration on Thursday next. He did not mean to press that they should at all events be discussed on that day, unless the honourable Gentleman, who was in possession of that day, should be willing to wave his right, or not oppose the matter coming on, on that day, which he hoped he would not oppose, and that he would give way to this urgent business. If, however, that should not be the case, he should propose that the reports be taken into consideration on Friday; but that at all events he could not delay it any further than Monday. He thought that the better way would be now to make the order for this discussion for Thursday; not that he should insist on its coming on that day, but that it should rather operate as a notice to stand for that day, unless he should hear in the interval that there are objections to its coming on that day; and when these reports are taken into consideration, it would be necessary to take the sense of the House on what is the most proper mode of enquiry into the causes of this event. An enquiry of that nature was one which he understood all parts of the House concurred in thinking necessary, in which he for one certainly joined. The mode of doing this would be matter of discussion; but he thought it highly important that that House should ascertain fully the real situation of this country in point of finance. He should move for a Committee to enquire into the state of the finance of this country, and to distinguish the increase of our debt since the commencement of the present war; the provision that had been made for that debt; to make a statement of the probable expences of the present year upon the supposition that the war should continue; and to make a general comparison between such probable expences, upon such a supposition, and the ways and means already provided for defraying them. He should then move, "That the two reports of the Committee on the affairs of the Bank, &c. be taken into consideration on Thursday next." Ordered.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, he could not answer whether his honourable

nourable friend would consent to postpone his motion on Thursday, but he supposed he would have no objection.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved, "That the second report of the Committee on the affairs of the Bank be printed." Ordered.

Adjourned to Thursday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, *March 9.*

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL BILL.

A short conversation took place between several Peers respecting the second reading of the Bill. The Lord Chancellor, Duke of Bridgewater, and Earl of Moira, were the principal speakers.

The Earl of *Moira* took a decided part against the Bill, and seemed to doubt the propriety of suffering it to proceed farther. His hostility was to its principle, and on public grounds. It was an intended monopoly, and, in various instances, trespassed on private property, without affording a compensation to such proprietors. His Lordship entered into some detail in illustration of this. Certain rights of the Crown were also affected by it. He thought, at any rate, that counsel should be heard against the Bill; and concluded by moving, "That they be called in."

The Duke of *Bridgewater* controverted many of the positions of the noble Earl. He said that a fair remuneration was intended to be made to individuals; and urged the propriety of referring the Bill to a Committee, where alone the details of the measure, and its effects, could be regularly discussed.

The *Lord Chancellor* shortly stated the effect of the regal rights in such cases. Whenever these were likely to be immediately affected by any measure, the consent of his Majesty to the entertaining of the proposition by Parliament became indispensably necessary. As to the present particular instance, by what he could collect, his Lordship seemed inclined to think that the Bill should go to a Committee.

After some farther conversation their Lordships divided on the question of hearing counsel, when there appeared

Contents	—	8
Not Contents	—	22

Majority	14
----------	----

The Bill was then ordered to be referred to the consideration of a Committee above stairs.

The Earl of *Ghatham* presented several state papers for the perusal of their Lordships, among which was the treaty between his Majesty and the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt. — They were ordered to lie on the table.

The Earl of *Moir* gave notice, that on Wednesday next he should move to take into consideration the various petitions on their Lordships' table, from the debtors in different gaols in the kingdom, and moved that the Lords be summoned. — Ordered.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *March 9.*

Upon the motion of Lord *Carrington* the thanks of the House were voted to the Rev. Dr. Powis, for his excellent sermon preached the preceding day, before the House of Commons, and Lord *Carrington* and Mr. Hawkins Browne were ordered to present the same to Dr. Powis.

Mr. *Canning* brought up a copy of the treaty between his Britannic Majesty and the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, which was ordered to be printed.

A copy of the preliminaries of this treaty was laid upon the table some time ago, this was a copy of the treaty, with the ratifications.

Mr. *Grey* reminded the honourable Gentleman of an account of the sums of money which had been advanced in consequence of this treaty, which was ordered to be made out some time ago, but which was not yet before the House.

COLCHESTER ELECTION.

The chairman of the Committee on the Colchester election reported the decision of that Committee, declaring the sitting member to be duly elected; the petition against the said election to be frivolous and vexatious, and the opposition to the said petition to be neither frivolous nor vexatious.

Mr. *Tierney* presented a petition from the parish of St. George's, Southwark, against the Poor Bill, which was ordered to lie upon the table till the said Bill was committed.

The American trade Bill passed through a Committee of the whole House.

BANK.

Mr. *Tierney* moved that there be laid before the House an account of all the outstanding sums advanced by the Bank
for

for the public service, distinguishing the dates of the several advances, with the amount of interest due thereon.—Ordered.

Mr. *Tierney* also moved that there be laid before the House a comparative statement of the encrease or decrease of discounts by the Bank in the week ending on the fourth of March, and of the week ending on the twenty fourth of February last.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* objected to this motion, because it would tend to divulge the private transactions of the Bank, and thereby prove injurious to public credit. The House had hitherto thought proper to trust their enquiry to a Secret Committee, which in its first report did not enter into any account of the discounts of the Bank, and therefore whatever might be the motives of the House, and its Secret Committee to use such a discretion, as he did not doubt that discretion was properly exercised with a true regard to the public interests, he trusted the same motives would decide the House not to agree to the motion. Besides, this was not the time to enter into any previous discussion about the management of the Bank, when the subject proposed for the consideration of the House rising out of the two reports of the Committee of Secrecy, would eventually determine what might be the most proper measures hereafter to be taken.

Mr. *Tierney* said, that the right honourable Gentleman certainly had not distinctly heard his motion, else he would not have opposed it on the grounds he adopted. He was induced to move for the account from no motive of impertinent curiosity, but merely to know the comparative amount of the discounts made by the Bank on the two weeks which had been specified. It was generally believed that they had encreased to a most enormous amount, and that uncommon accommodation was granted to every person who was disposed to be in the least clamorous. It was important for the House to know whether this belief was true or false, and the information might be granted in perfect consistency with the report of the Committee. He was very much surprised, indeed, that the right honourable Gentleman had objected to its being given; since, if the Bank really possessed solidity of resource, and, if the conduct of the Directors was guided by that prudence for which they got credit, the greater publicity that was given either to the state or the management of their affairs the better.

Mr. *Sheridan*, in support of the motion of Mr. *Tierney*, contended, that it appeared from the report of the Com-

mittee, if the amount of these discounts could have been known when they made their report, that it would have contained all the information which it was the object of the present motion to obtain. He also agreed with his honourable friend's opinion, that nothing could so much injure the credit of the Bank and the confidence reposed in it by the public as unnecessary and affected concealment. He thought it strange that the right honourable Gentleman should object to an account being made out of the discounts of the Bank to private individuals, after having no objections to the production of an account of sums advanced by them to the public, as, in his opinion, there were the same reasons for refusing the one that there were for objecting to the other.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* stated in answer to Mr. Sheridan's observations, that it was common to move for an account of the sums advanced by the Bank for the public service, but that there was no instance of the House of Commons demanding an account of their discounts to private individuals. It was for this reason that he had objected to the present, after having agreed to the former motion.

Mr. *Fox* disclaimed any intention of entering into an enquiry into the competent parts of the property of the Bank, such an enquiry being altogether inapplicable to the present motion. The object of his honourable friend was not to ascertain how much of the property of the Bank consisted in discounts, but in what proportion these discounts had increased since the 24th of February last. It was possible that since the Order in Council of that date was issued, the affairs of the Bank might be so materially altered by their proportion of discounts, as to effect the necessity of the continuance of that order. If their discounts had increased, of course the necessity of continuing the operations of the Order was become stronger; whereas, if they had decreased, the necessity was certainly not so great, and consequently it ought to be limited to a shorter time. He supported the motion therefore on the ground that the account was necessary to enable the House to take the proper steps, either for continuing or removing the prohibition laid upon the Bank, and under which they at present acted.

Lord *Hawkebury* was of opinion that the account might contain information which it was not proper to lay before the public. Besides, it was rendered unnecessary by the report of the Secret Committee, as it was there stated that, from the information they had of the amount of the discounts
of

of the Bank, of which they had seen no regular accounts, they concluded, that they made little difference in the general state of its affairs.

Sir *Benjamin Hammet* rose to defend the wise and prudent conduct of the Directors of the Bank, and particularly the propriety of granting accommodation by discounts to the merchants and private bankers, without which trade would come to a stand.

Mr. *Tierney* professed that his motive for moving for the account was not to get at the knowledge of any secret that it was improper to declare, but that he had been actuated by the most perfect good opinion of the solidity of their funds.

The question being put, the motion was negatived without a division.

Mr. *Tierney* then moved for an account of the amount of Exchequer bills issued upon the authority of an act passed in the present session of Parliament for raising eighteen millions by way of annuities, distinguishing the dates at which they were issued with the rates of discount.—Ordered.

PAYMENT TO THE BANK.

Mr. *Sheridan* begged leave to offer a few observations upon the reports of the Committee of Secrecy, as they were materially connected with the business of the day, and afterwards suggest such a proposition as the nature of the circumstances seemed to require. The first measure which he thought necessary to adopt was, to endeavour to prevent the impression which the report of the Committee of Secrecy might have upon the public opinion respecting the situation of the Bank, because, according to the report of the Committee, the government was represented as a debtor to the Bank in various sums, independent of eleven millions, which the Committee reckoned as forming so much of the capital stock of the Bank, when in fact that eleven millions was no debt at all, and a declaration of such a nature was calculated to mislead. Instead of being included in the capital stock of the Bank as a debt, it should have been reckoned what it really is, as an annuity of 330,000*l.* per annum, that sum being the stipulated interest for the other, during a certain term of years. If the eleven million actually belonged to the effects of the Bank and was available at any time, and for any purpose, that sum might be made applicable in any exigency to discharge any demand which might occur ; but that
could

could not be called a debt where there were no means of claiming the sum so reckoned. Government might pay off that sum if it were so inclined, it is true, but it was improbable that it would do so, nor was it at present very probable that government would pay it off in 1814, that being the expiration of the eighteen years for which it was obtained, when it could retain the use of it for so small an interest as 3 per cent. There was no power in the Bank to compel the payment of this money at any period, and the payment of it rested solely on the option of government. The Bank, as a corporation, was merely a vehicle for managing the national debt, and so long as the national debt existed, the Bank would exist also. It would be a corporation to the end of time. He wished indeed it might not be so; but he repeated it would be a corporation to the end of time if the national debt remained unpaid. So far then it was evident that the eleven millions did not form a part of the capital stock of the Bank, but only gave it an annuity, and this was an instance, he would not say of the inaccuracy or design to misrepresent of the Committee, but of a statement, in consequence of which a sort of impression had gone abroad, as if that money were immediately applicable to any object of relief. The enquiry then would be, of what effects the seventeen millions are composed which are to defray the outstanding engagements of the Bank. They consist of course, of cash in hand, of other disposeable securities, and of bills which the Bank has discounted. If part of the assets then consist in bills which have been discounted, the motion of his hon. friend (Mr. Tierney) was proper, in desiring to know the encrease or decrease of those discounts; for if the Bank continued to issue fresh discounts, whatever else might be the incredible distress of individuals, according to the hon. Knight (Sir Benjamin Hammet) after it had refused to pay its own notes, although he did not wish to give his opinion of the propriety of extending its discounts, he was obliged to say that the distress of individuals was the only excuse for such a measure. He now came to examine the situation of the Bank in respect to government. It appeared by the paper on the table, that government owed 9,964,000*l.* to the Bank which remained as part of their assets, and the permanent securities towards defraying the 13,770,000*l.* of outstanding demands upon it. Now, what had been the conduct of government in this affair, but the most extraordinary that ever occurred? By parity of reasoning let any gentleman, take a supposable case of individuals acting

acting in the same way, and see how it would stand. If a merchant, for instance, had assets in bonds, merchandize, discounts, and other disposeable commodities, to the value of 17,000*l.* out of which he owed to various creditors 13,000*l.* but had on the *per contra* side of his account 10,000*l.* due to him by one man, which was within 3,000*l.* of the extent of his engagements, would not that merchant think it very extraordinary conduct in that man, if he should say, Sir, "I understand that your affairs are in a ticklish way, let me make an enquiry and examine them; and if upon a strict examination, I discover that you have wherewithal in due time to extricate yourself from your difficulties, and discharge your debts; I will not say that I may not guarantee them for you." Yet, however absurd and extraordinary such a mode of proceeding might appear, such had actually been the mode of proceeding between the government and the Bank. To go back to the comparison—the gentleman would say, "Why do you not pay me the money you owe me before you make such a request, and then I may be able to satisfy every demand without your interference." Such should have been the conduct of the Directors of the Bank upon the present occasion. He would not say that the government had not been highly criminal; and that the Directors of the Bank had not committed great errors. He might be blamed at such a crisis for speaking so plainly; but plain dealing was now the only method to recover public credit. The next enquiry was, whether the Bank had declined all at once, or suffered a gradual decrease; and if the latter were the case, how happened it that the fatal effects which ensued were not foreseen, nor measures taken to prevent them? About four years ago the Bank encreased their dividends to 7 per cent. which indicated a growing prosperity; and granting that to be the case, could they have declined all at once? Was the House and the public to imagine, when the Bank undertook to subscribe one million last year towards the Loyalty loan of eighteen millions, that they were then suffering a gradual decrease? because if they were, how happened it that government did not take one measure to pay the debt, or any part of it, which it owed to the Bank, to prevent the inconveniencies which it has lately been subjected to, but on the contrary took an additional sum of one million. It appeared as if it had almost been the desire and plan of government to reduce the Bank to such a situation, and nothing short of infatuation on the part of the
Bank

Bank could have submitted to it. If the present difficulties were foreseen, why did the government shut the door when the books for the subscription of the Loyalty loan of eighteen millions were open, and when people from every part of the kingdom came forward with their money and were disappointed? Why, instead of closing the account at eighteen millions, did they not extend it to thirty millions, when they found they could raise the money with so little trouble and inconvenience? Did they fear that by keeping the books open for the receipt of a larger sum than they had originally stated, they should depress the funds? Allowing that the Minister did think so, ought he not to have deliberated a little, and have rather taken 12 millions more to pay the Bank with a temporary depression of the funds, which would soon have rebounded to their usual standard, than have subjected mercantile men to so much distress and difficulty, by the narrowing of discounts, reduced the Bank to such a deplorable situation, depressed the funds lower than he would have done at that time, and given so severe a shock to public credit. If the Minister did not know of the gradual decrease of the prosperity of the Bank, and did not foresee these consequences, he stands excused; but then there will be much blame and error of judgment attributable to the Bank. What then, it might be said, ought not the Directors of the Bank to lend assistance to government, or to individuals, in cases of temporary difficulty and on permanent securities? Undoubtedly if they could do so they ought; but let them first recollect that they are not the trustees of the public, nor of government funds, but the trustees of Bank proprietors, of widows, and of orphans; who, if they were blindly to go on in lending unlimited assistance must eventually be ruined. Here then it might be asked, what measures did government pursue, to enable the Bank to pay its outstanding engagements? It would naturally be supposed that something was done, besides the prohibition of paying in specie. It does not appear, however, that any thing was done to avoid the measures which government adopted. Had the Bank not the means to do it then? Certainly they had, for their sufficiency has been declared. Did the Bank call in any of the debts which were due to them? Did it narrow its discounts, or did it dispose of any of its disposeable effects? One of these, if not all, would have been the plan of a merchant to retrieve himself in a similar situation; and yet not one of these measures did the Bank adopt. Why did they not sell
the

the Loyalty Loan? If they had sold it, they might have sold it with a loss to themselves 'tis true, but do not most men in embarrassed situations, if they dispose of their disposeable effects with loss to satisfy their creditors, suffer the loss themselves? The Bank Trustees were bound to do justice to their creditors, to their trust, and to themselves; and it was extraordinary to see wise and just men like them brought to such a situation. Upon these grounds, therefore, he thought it his duty to give notice, that he should (the next day) move that immediate steps be taken to pay the money advanced by the Directors of the Bank to Government.

Mr. *Harrison* put off his motion respecting the retrenchment of the public expences which stood for this day to Monday next.

Mr. *Fox* put off his motion for the repeal of the Treason and Sedition Acts, which stood for the next day, to that day fortnight.

Mr. *Ellis* put off his motion on the Slave Trade, which stood for Monday, till next Friday.

COMMITTEE OF SECRECY.

The order of the day for taking the two reports of the Secret Committee appointed to enquire into the affairs of the Bank into consideration, being read,

Mr. *Fox* moved, that on account of the convenience of speaking oftener than once, the reports might be taken into consideration in a Committee of the whole House.

The House having resolved itself into said Committee, Mr. *Sylvester Douglas* in the chair.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* rose. He said he felt it his duty, in consequence of the circumstances which had been submitted to the consideration of the House, by the report of the Committee of Secrecy, to trouble the House with respect to the facts to which that report related. The facts contained in the report were to be considered in a double point of view; first, as relative to the general state of the funds of the Bank, and the propriety of the Order of Council of the 26th of February, restraining the payment of money in specie, the other with regard to the urgency and necessity of confirming and continuing that order. With respect to the first, namely, that part which related to the finances of the Bank, he would venture to assert, that such had been the effect of it on the public mind, as well as on that of the House; such had been the universal impression made by the general statement of the funds of the Bank in the report, that there did not exist a question of the general sufficiency and solidity of their funds: from the moment that

report had been made public, there did appear an almost general persuasion of their ultimate solidity and sufficiency. But there was another source from which he drew his own full conviction of the prosperous state of the funds of the Bank, which was, the opinion of those who were the most interested in subjects of a pecuniary nature, he meant the merchants and bankers of the city of London, who had clearly and unequivocally manifested to the world the solidity of the Bank, not merely by the declaration of their opinions and judgments, but by adopting a line of conduct which evinced the sincerity of those opinions. He believed that the general impression made in the House, and out of it, was such, that not a doubt was entertained with regard to the ultimate security of the Bank, and until this day, in the speech of an honourable gentleman, he had never heard any thing stated, that in the smallest degree questioned the truth of the statement, contained in the report of the Committee; that the assets in the Bank greatly exceeded all the demands against it. There had been some observations made by the same honourable gentleman, to which he should think it necessary to advert, particularly that in which the capital of the Bank of England, as a corporation, was considered. It had been stated that the sums due from the public to the Bank of England was neither equivalent to, nor was to be considered in the same point of view as the capital of any other corporation or company that embarked in trade. In answer to that he would observe, that the security of a certain number of traders, whether corporation or not, consisted not only of the original sum embarked, but also of whatever profit had been produced in the course of time; and to deny that such original property embarked, if still unimpaired, whether it was secured as part of their outstanding debt or not, was not part of their capital, was to deny every principle on which every mercantile account was ever constructed. He thought it necessary to have made that consideration a part of the question upon this occasion. This was a question which had for its object the ultimate security of the funds of the Bank, and not whether the demand against it were to be paid at a particular day or hour. It was a question with reference to the solvency and solid capital of the Bank. It was not a question, whether the Bank contained actual specie equal to those demands; but whether they had good debts due to them, or property of any other description, which might be finally available to them in the liquidation of the debts owing to the public. Such was the true description of the question, and in that view alone ought it to be considered: whereas the question had been
been

been considered not with respect to the means of the Bank, and with reference as to the manner in which the Bank was to answer to their creditors; but how far it had or had not carried on an advantageous trade, all that was foreign to the subject of the present enquiry. The House had nothing at all to do with the question of the internal œconomy of the Bank, that had always been left to their own decision; but it did, in point of fact, appear upon the report, that the Bank was rich, was possessed of substance far exceeding the demands of the public, and that the individuals composing the corporation would have a far greater sum to divide, if such a division of property was to take place, than they had originally embarked, and therefore, with regard to the question of ultimate security, it could not by any means be contended, that there was the least doubt created upon that head, because of the necessity of preventing the payment in specie for a particular limited time. It had been stated, that the debt due from Government to the Bank, was a debt not demandable till a given day, and only bearing an interest of three per cent. still, however, their inability to obtain that debt from Government was no proof that they could not conduct their affairs independent of it, for supposing the Bank was in such a situation, that they could not carry on business, the public would not suffer them to continue any longer in possession of that monopoly which gave them the privilege of conducting the public pecuniary concerns, but it was clear that the monopoly could not be withdrawn without the public becoming collectively responsible to each individual, therefore the debt of eleven millions to the public, equal to which the Government was indebted to the Bank, would put the public exactly in the same situation in the event of the insolvency of the Bank, as if it had been paid to them, but added to that, the public had for the payment of the debts due from the Bank, the Parliamentary faith of the kingdom, and the security of the whole property of the country. It therefore, seemed, that if the object was only to consider the ultimate solidity of the Bank, that the Committee could not have done their duty, if they had not included this debt with every other debt due to the Bank, and particularly considering it as one which stood on the safest of all the foundations, and as one which stood on the best security, the great power of the community could give. He contended that the report ought to confirm the opinion of the complete and entire sufficiency of the Bank, and he thought he had the satisfaction of every gentleman in the House concurring in that opinion, till he heard the honourable gentleman state what he had this day. It was

not his intention to make any proposal to the House on this part of the subject ; but he conceived, that the enquiry into the ultimate security of the Bank being the point referred to the Committee, in consequence of the suspension of the temporary payments in cash, ought alone to be the question agitated in the House ; and he trusted that the measure which had been adopted of suspending such temporary payments, would be considered by the House as one which made the ultimate responsibility of the Bank secure, and on that account, that the House would agree in the propriety of continuing the restrictions. A great deal had been said with respect to the propriety of examining the causes which had led to the necessity of issuing the Order of council ; it certainly appeared a matter of difficulty, to distinguish the boundaries between the necessity, and the causes which produced it, for if a cause could be shewn for a necessity, it would go far towards removing the necessity by pointing out the means of obviating the cause. Such was a fair mode of reasoning ; but it also seemed plain that there was a difference between a particular necessity for a measure, and the particular measure for continuing it. He understood there was not a difference of opinion, with respect to the propriety of every thing being examined, that could shew the necessity of the measure which had been adopted on the 26th of February.

The Committee had only reported with respect to the actual existence of a necessity of continuing the measure, they had not reported on the necessity of taking the measure, they had not reported on the cause. On the necessity of continuing the restriction for a limited time, they had reported a clear opinion, that in their judgments it did appear indispensibly necessary to continue it. He knew that many who might consider the truth of there existing a necessity of continuing the measure, were not equally well satisfied with regard to the cause ; he certainly did not mean that the report of the Committee was to be considered, as any sanction of the original measure ; but he only contended, with respect to the necessity of continuing it for the present, that it was impossible for any one to read the report, without being sensible of it, and without feeling at the same time, that all the members who composed the Committee, were impressed with the necessity of continuing the restriction on well founded public grounds. The next question, therefore, for the consideration of the House was, for what time it should be continued. The House had referred the question
to

to a Committee. The Committee had reported in distinct terms, that the necessity existed; he should therefore feel it his duty to propose the continuance of the measure recommended, by the Committee, a measure which he was persuaded they would not have recommended, had they not thought it stood on reasonable grounds. What might be the time proper to extend the restriction to, or what might be the best means for the House to adopt, with regard to adding to the period if necessary, or of shortening it, if circumstances enabled them so to do with safety, were questions which would be best considered in the future progress of the Bill. He should feel it his duty on the grounds of the report, to lose no time in submitting still to the House, for the purpose of confirming, and continuing for a limited time, the restrictions with respect to the payment of money in specie by the Bank. If it should be adopted, the House must naturally feel, that those over whom they extended their authority, should also receive their protection. The Order of Council had been issued by Government on the ground of the necessity, and was admitted not to have been legal, unless made so by the House; therefore, as the House had given their sanction to Government for issuing the Order, he had no doubt but they would see the necessity of indemnifying Government for what had been done. He thought this was the proper stage for the House to declare how far Government merited censure or indemnification. He maintained that the House having adopted the measure by admitting the necessity of continuing it, ought of course to indemnify those who had issued it. Mr. Pitt then referred to Mr. Sheridan, with respect to the notice he had given of the motion which he intended to make. It seemed from what had fallen from that honourable Gentleman, that he felt it doubtful, whether it was necessary to continue the measure, notwithstanding the opinion of the Committee; as far as related to the question of the cause of the adoption of the measure, he did not mean to enter at large into it, and with regard to the necessity of taking the measure or of the cause which led to it, it certainly was the sense of the House that those subjects were not matter of consideration in the House, but ought to be referred to a Secret Committee. If the honourable Gentleman's proposal for obviating the necessity of adopting the measure now before the House, was connected with a subject that could only be enquired of by a Secret Committee, he thought it ought not to be entered into in point

point of fact ; the understanding that prevailed in that House was, that the necessity of taking the measure, as well as of continuing it, were both subjects for a Secret Committee to enquire into, there certainly had been a difference of opinion with regard to the best mode of constituting the Committee ; but it was admitted that a Committee of Secrecy was the best calculated to discuss the causes of the necessity ; and therefore, till such enquiry was had, it was impossible for him, or the House to come to any certain conclusion ; and he hoped on that account that he might be excused from entering into the question of the causes of the necessity, till the House by the appointment of a Committee, authorized to make the necessary enquiries, should have put the subject in a proper train of examination. Whether the honourable Gentleman's intended motion would have the effect of doing away the necessity of adopting the present measure, was more than he could say, but he thought it impossible that any thing could be done in so short a period as one day, to prevent its adoption, or that so limited an interval could possibly bring forward any plan to render it unnecessary. He conceived that the House ought not to deliberate upon the propriety of any remedies which might be proposed, without agreeing in the mean time to continue the measure for a limited time. If the question was to be, with regard to the most likely means of restoring the proportion between the balance of cash in the Bank, and of their outstanding demands, he would ask any mercantile man who heard him, whether a more new, or extraordinary idea could be proposed, for resuming the functions of the Bank, than to say, whether such an idea was likely to be attended with any beneficial effect ; could it be right to adopt the very mode which would operate so, to leave no Bank notes, or at least comparatively few in circulation. He thought that the honourable Gentleman's proposal in the view he saw it, was calculated to do away, at a period when there was a general stagnation of cash, one of the wisest measures that possibly could be taken for lessening the difficulties, under which the country laboured at this arduous moment. He hoped he should not take up the time of the House in maintaining, that it was impossible to suspend the necessity, by any thing which could in the short interval of a day be brought forward of confirming the Order of Council. He observed, that he should think it his duty to propose to the House, to refer the enquiry into the cause
which

which had produced the necessity, to the same Committee as had before been appointed, and to the existence of the cause, at the time the Order was issued. There was another point to which he would draw the attention of the House ; it was his intention to refer to the Committee, powers to enable them to enter into the examination and discussion of every circumstance, which they might have the least reason to suppose in any respect deranged the ordinary channel through which the finances and resources of the country flowed, and to ascertain not merely what related to the Bank, but what was the real and undisguised situation of the country. He had the satisfaction to declare, that whatever was the inconveniencies which existed in the country at this period, whatever temporary difficulties might press hard upon the people, whatever was the extent of our present burthens, or how far it might be still necessary to encrease them, that the real advantages, the fundamental and radical resources of the country were great and flattering.

He entertained no anxiety with respect to the result of an enquiry, whenever it should be entered into. It would be idle in him to protest his sentiments on such an occasion, as they must be obvious to the House ; but that he should feel a greater degree of exultation at such an enquiry than others, he trusted, could hardly be doubted. He was persuaded, whatever might be the opinion of the House with regard to retrospective circumstances or events, that still as to the great point of the extent and solidity of the resources of the country there would be no difference of opinion, after a fair and candid enquiry. He wished for an enquiry to include the whole extent of the burthens incurred, as well as of the means we have of paying them, and also into the whole amount of our expenditure, with a view to the present year, that nothing might be kept back, but, on the contrary, every thing stated, that the country might be able to meet the exigencies of its situation fairly. He should also think it important to accompany the enquiry by recommending the measures adopted for the reduction of the national debt, which he wished to extend in any beneficial manner that could be pointed out, with a view to any farther reduction that could consistently be made ; but he trusted the House would not determine on the necessity of a reduction of our debt without first looking at the value of services to be performed ; whether they could be performed cheaper, or whether they were worth what prudence would wish to bestow. He feared no examination on every point connected with the finances of the country. He was solicit-

ous that the enquiry should be as comprehensive as possible ; he was satisfied that such an enquiry would prove satisfactory to the country at large, by convincing the public of the real extent of their situation and resources. On these grounds he should first move " for leave to bring in a Bill to confirm and continue for a limited time the restriction against the issuing of money in specie by the Bank of England."

Mr. Fox rose, and spoke in substance as follows. Before I proceed to consider the different points which the right honourable Gentleman proposes to submit to the House, I must beg leave to say a few words with regard to the first report of the Secret Committee, and their statement of the assets of which the Bank is possessed. I think that the Committee did what was fair in stating to the House the sum of eleven millions of permanent debt due by Government, because in the manner in which it was stated there could be no intention to deceive, as the Committee could not but be sensible that the House would understand the true nature of this debt, and the proper light in which it was to be viewed. I nevertheless think that my honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) was perfectly correct in the observations he made upon this subject. Is there any man so ignorant, can there be any member of the House so ill-informed, as to consider that sum as available to its utmost extent, or as assets which in case of necessity the Bank could employ? It is in fact an annuity of 330,000*l.* which Government may or may not, as it thinks proper, redeem. But, says the right hon. Gentleman, if the Bank should cease to answer the purposes for which it was intended, and terminate its operations, you can withdraw the monopoly which you have allowed it. Without supposing a case of absolute ruin and total annihilation, may not the Bank be placed in a situation in which it is desirous to redeem its debts, and to avail itself of all its means? In this case you must consider to what extent this sum could be reckoned upon, and how far it would be available. In this view, then, it must be evident to every one, that this sum of eleven millions cannot be taken as an effectual debt to that amount equal to such a demand, but only as a redeemable annuity of 330,000*l.* The right honourable Gentleman says, that the first report of the Committee has had the effect to confirm the opinion which previously was obtained of the complete solvency. Upon this point, I confess, that my sentiments are precisely the same they were before. Yet I must consider the report as productive of, at least, one very useful and important consequence, if it has induced the right honourable Gentleman to abandon the intention which he announced

nounced of guaranteeing the notes of the Bank with the sanction of Government. From the fullest reflection, I am convinced that the more you identify the Bank with the Government, the more you make it dependant upon the measures of Administration, the more you cement an union, calculated not for permanent good, but for temporary expedient; you increase the source from which our misfortunes have sprung, and cause a great additional calamity to those with which the country is already oppressed. With regard to the second report of the Committee, the right honourable Gentleman laments that the report is so limited. The right honourable Gentleman and the House will do me the justice to acknowledge, that, upon a former discussion, I stated that the words of the reference to the Committee did limit their enquiries; an opinion which the Committee, by their report, have proved to have been well founded. The right honourable Gentleman says, that they ought to have gone into the necessity which produced the Order in Council. To an investigation of this kind, it was essential that an enquiry into the causes should take place; what were to be considered as proximate and what remote causes, or into what extent the enquiry should branch, was subject for the discretion of the Committee, as the right honourable Gentleman himself had admitted; but to have enabled the Committee to enter into the enquiry to any good, and to have put it in their power to exercise that discretion, the order under which they were to act should have been large and comprehensive, affording a latitude which discretion should modify. But with regard to what the Committee have actually reported, I must confess that it appears to me that they have reported nothing that is not self-evident. There is no subtle, no metaphysical distinction necessary to demonstrate that there exists a very great difference between the necessity of at first resorting to the measure and the necessity of continuing it. I have no hesitation to say, that the very issuing and acting upon such a measure creates the necessity of its continuance. Whatever may be thought of the embarrassments which previously existed, and the demand on which it was immediately founded, there can be no difference of opinion as to the run which would ensue, and the drain which would be experienced, on the Order being abruptly taken off. Although I thus recognize the necessity of continuing the Order for some time, it does not follow that we should be insensible of the importance of my honourable friend's observations. I confess I am not so sanguine of the effects of the measure he proposes, as to imagine that it will supersede the necessity of

VOL. II. 1797. M m conti.

continuing the Order of Council, but I am convinced it will tend to limit its duration. The right honourable Gentleman says, that my honourable friend's proposal requires time, in order to produce any good effect. Admitted. And this is the very reason why it ought to be adopted. But there is another reason why we ought to embrace it, which, in a moment so critical as the present, ought to be felt with the deepest interest, and to operate with the greatest energy:—it is the performance of our most sacred duty to the House, and to the country. It involves the character of the public representatives, and the honour of the nation. If the Order of Council be not merely a notification that the Bank is not to make payments in cash, if it is not merely an incident which turns the finances from their usual channel, but a blow to public credit, and a wound to the public prosperity; if we are compelled by due necessity to continue so fatal, so eventful a measure, we ought at least to accompany it with the substantial and consolatory illustration, that we are taking measures to remove its necessity, and to limit its duration. At present, I beg the question, that the payment to the Bank which my honourable friend proposes would produce the desired effect; at least it would be important to shew to the world that we are eager to apply the remedy to the distresses under which we labour. In the dreadful circumstances of being compelled to avow, and to sanction by legislative authority, an act of bankruptcy, it is some consolation to think that we accompany it with a measure that tends to prevent its fatal consequences. It is weighty and important for the public to see that their representatives are alive to the seriousness of their situation, and active to repair the calamities to which the country is reduced. But the honourable Gentleman says, that as the payment which Government could make the Bank must be in paper, it could not have the effect of enabling the Bank to make their payments in cash. I beg leave to refer to what the right honourable Gentleman said on a former occasion, that the advances by the Bank to Government were in paper. Without determining whether the epithet of childish is justly applied to the right honourable Gentleman's argument, or what other epithet belongs to it, I must say, however, that his distinction is not a little extraordinary. Does it not occur to every Gentleman in the House, however, that there is a very great difference between paper equivalent to cash and paper for which cash cannot be obtained? When the Bank advanced five millions, for instance, of paper convertible into cash, that paper issued by Government for various services became so much additional paper,

paper, for which the Bank was liable to be called upon for cash. The case now, indeed, is far different. It certainly is less relief to the Bank to pay in paper than to pay in specie: you do not in the one case positively add to the quantity of specie which the Bank possesses, but you may diminish the amount of the paper for which they are liable, and so increase their ability to meet what remains. Upon this important point I cannot agree with the right honourable Gentleman. If you do pay in paper, you at least diminish the disproportion between cash and paper, which certainly adds greatly to the present embarrassment. In the view of the case which the right honourable Gentleman holds out, the difficulties which the country experiences are owing to the want of a circulating medium; Government preventing the Bank from increasing the circulating medium, is, in their own view of the subject, an evil to be removed. I have no hesitation in saying, however, that the most desirable mode of remedying the embarrassment which the Bank experienced, would be by an increase of cash; but if the disproportion between specie and paper produced that state of things which terminated in a public act of bankruptcy, and a notorious breach of faith, I consider a diminution of the quantity by a payment in paper would contribute to lessen the evil under which we now labour. With regard to the functions of the Bank I disagree entirely from the right honourable Gentleman. The Bank should do nothing inconsistent with the interest of the proprietors for whom they act. When the Directors of the Bank consider the public interest, instead of that of the proprietors, they depart from their proper sphere, and the effect of their conduct is to sacrifice their private interest to the public good. Let the functions of the Bank and of Parliament be kept distinct, and they are both exercised to the public advantage. Let the Directors of the Bank pursue their private interests, and attend to their own concerns; let Parliament and Ministers devote their attention to public measures: this is an arrangement which suits better with their respective objects, and conduces best to their common ends, instead of that union of duties in which every thing is confounded, and that distraction of pursuits in which every thing is destroyed. That a diminution of discount and of the issue of paper ought to take place, I have no difficulty in saying. That this would be attended with inconvenience cannot be doubted. But, on the other hand, this inconvenience ought to be compared with those no less real evils which it would tend to remove. The advantages and disadvantages ought to be balanced. The House should determine whether any of the consequences
which

which it would involve are equal to the mischiefs which our present state presents. In reality, the Bank ought to be viewed as unconnected with Government. That they ought to regard the public interest is certainly true; but this object they are most likely to attain by a wise prosecution of their own. I know nothing in the charter of the Bank that binds them to discount to any particular extent, or to discount at all. I find, however, from the experience of one hundred happy years, that they have gone on in supplying this accommodation with advantage to themselves and to the public. The Bank, however, must have been aware of the situation in which they were placed; they must have been sensible that the drain of cash they experienced would reduce them to a state when they could no longer pay in specie. They do not seem upon this prospect to have acted with that prudence and discretion which they ought to have exerted. They ought to have adopted measures to encrease their cash, and to diminish the paper which caused the demand. They ought to have done what, in similar circumstances, a prudent individual would have done. They ought to have narrowed their circumstances for a time, to gain that credit which would afterwards have enabled them to have pursued their operations with encreased prosperity and success. The conduct which the Minister thought proper to prescribe, however, was directly the reverse. He boldly resolved to defraud the public creditor, to violate the faith of all engagements, rather than that the Bank should narrow their discounts, or discontinue their advances to Government. I would ask, How are you to encrease the quantity of cash in proportion to the encreased circulation of paper? To encrease its quantity is not in your power; but do at least what you can; avail yourselves of the remedy you possess; diminish the quantity of paper, and reduce that disproportion which exists between paper and specie. This, at least, is in your power, and to a certain extent its good effects will be felt. Does the right honourable Gentleman think that, by giving a forced circulation to paper, he will be able to draw cash from the lurking places to which it may have retired, or turn the course of foreign exchange so much in our favour as to remove the difficulties under which we labour? It may be said that, in this manner you strike at commerce, you suspend industry, and strike at the sources of revenue. There are certainly many nice considerations upon this subject, which are not to be lightly treated. It is one of the accumulated evils of our situation, that it is impossible to embrace any remedy which applies to the evil which affects the country
upon

upon the one hand, without committing some injury to it upon the other. He who talks of plans, of positive plans to go at once to the disease, who hopes to produce great good without hazarding a mixture of evil, is not the person from whom, in a situation like the present, much advantage is to be expected. Such plans are those of the visionary projector, who arranges his plan without considering the circumstances in which it is to operate. All that is left is a choice of evils. He that talks rationally will rejoice if he can discover a remedy that with some evil will be able to overcome the mortality of the disease. Here, as in every other instance, the dictates of wisdom do not clash with the precepts of morality. No concealment should be attempted in the affairs of the Bank. The Bank should have but one object, that of performing their engagements and discharging their debts. We have heard of the phrase "perish Commerce, let the Constitution live." The exclamation of the Bank should be "perish Commerce, provided we pay our debts," and if any temporary inconvenience should be felt, their unsullied integrity and unimpeached credit would be the pledge of its ample restoration and increased prosperity. If, by the narrowing of discounts, commerce should sink under temporary difficulties, it would revive vigorous and powerful from that credit which had fallen to support it. Such a decisive measure would, in every view of policy, be more favourable to commerce and to prosperity, than a sickly existence and lingering expedients. By acting upon these plain and natural principles, some good may be obtained. Any thing else will prove false and delusory. The Bank ought to act for the advantage of their constituents, and in doing so they will best promote the benefit of the public. Any other miserable expedients will only encrease the evil which they are intended to remove. Suppose, for instance, that government were to pay five or six millions to the Bank in paper, which the Bank was to destroy, and that, though it produced a temporary stagnation, it restored the solvency of the Bank, and enabled them to make their payments in cash. By this means credit (if credit can at all be revived after it has received so fatal a shock), being revived and confidence restored, I would ask, if the revival of commerce would not immediately follow? I would ask too if credit is destroyed, is its return equally certain; would its revival be equally soon? This is the measure of prudence, and, in the view of policy, that which

it

it would be wise to adopt. But when you consider, that along with this you fulfil your engagements to the public creditor, that the Bank is put in a situation to discharge its notes in cash, can you hesitate to embrace an alternative by which you can preserve your honour, and pursue your interest? Expedients will turn out as expedients usually do. A projector is never tired by disappointment. If the right honourable gentleman, however, recollects the many expedients which he has already employed, some of them calculated perhaps to produce a little good, if he reflects upon the different schemes which he has attempted in the last fourteen months, he will be convinced how unavailing are projects opposed to the natural stream of things, how futile it is, by such paltry resources, to supply an expenditure, monstrous and extravagant, he will be tired of the repetition of such delusions and disgusted with the prospect of fresh disappointments. But the right honourable gentleman, I am afraid, is not to be deterred by experience. Two months hence we shall be discussing some new expedient of the right honourable gentleman, till at length the beginning of bankruptcy, which we have already witnessed, proceeding from one progress to another, terminates in complete insolvency. I do not say that the right honourable gentleman's expedients were all bad, but they were not sufficient to remedy the evil.—Trusting to inefficient expedients, we at length find ourselves in the gulph in which we are plunged. It is time therefore to recur to fundamental principles, and to act upon them strictly. Without this there is no hopes of redeeming the country, no chance of escaping the ruin by which we are threatened. With regard to the ideas which the right honourable gentleman threw out, so far as they go, they have my approbation. The first of the proposals which he makes is, to take a complete view of our financial situation. There was a time when a motion for an enquiry of this nature was made two years ago, and when the country might have been saved, when the embarrassments that have been experienced might have been prevented, and the necessity of the proclamation avoided. Last year too, had the motion of my honourable friend (Mr. Grey), to that effect, been listened to, we should not now have been discussing how the public creditor was to be paid. But the House goes on confiding till an act of bankruptcy is passed, and then they think of enquiring. It is the fate of all the right honourable gentleman's projects to come too late. The proposals of peace
which

which he made in December last, would have been accepted in 1794, or in the beginning of 1796. But when they were out of date, when the moment at which they would have been received has passed away, he makes proposals, which in proper time would have saved the country. How long is this system to be allowed to go on? How long are we to be doomed to sustain this ruinous and destructive war, which all thinking men now join to execrate, because the right honourable gentleman is wise too late, and discovers that line of conduct, which it is too late to pursue with success? Let the right honourable gentleman look back, and he will see the repeated instances in which the interests of the country have been sacrificed by his tardy wisdom. Perhaps now he may be prepared to offer terms of peace, which a few months ago would have been accepted with eagerness. At length, after having so obstinately resisted it, he comes forward and tells us, that it is proper to enquire. Late, however, as this enquiry is to be granted, it will be attended with one good effect. It will, I hope, lead to a declaration, that the calamities in which we are involved have been brought upon us, to say no more, by the errors of Ministers, and by the confidence of the last Parliament. It will demonstrate that the country has been led to the brink of destruction by Parliament relinquishing the principle of the constitution, and the customs of our ancestors. The House trusted when it ought to have enquired, and we are now told that we are to enquire, when it is doubtful, whether enquiry can save, and when the punishment of the delinquent is the only consolation that remains for calamities which cannot be remedied, and errors that cannot be retrieved. Of late it has been too much the practice to give up the privileges which the constitution secures; it has been the fashion to wish to change a free government into an absolute monarchy. For my own part, I declare that no exigency shall prevail upon me to consent to encrease the power of the crown. It is still my opinion, that the measure which the Council adopted, if necessary, should have originated in this House. The real cause of all our calamities has been, that, whether by its own power or the connivance of Parliament, the crown has swallowed up the whole government. I know that if this enquiry had been sooner undertaken, there was a chance for salvation. Is there a man who thinks that after this House felt and acknowledged that peace with France had become practicable, that if men had fairly told what they thought,
and

and acted from their conviction, peace might not have been obtained? But servility, base servility, has been the ruin of this country. There must now be a total change of measures, a radical change of system. We must see a system of things restored under which men will speak their minds without a mean consideration of interest, and a base dependance upon Ministers. The great object which we ought to pursue upon the present occasion, is to abridge as much as possible the duration of the measure which has become necessary. I hope it will be short, but I hope too, that no power will be given to the crown to suspend its force. Parliament ought to sit expressly for this bill, and though it were to sit five years together, the Minister, who should advise his Majesty to prorogue it till this measure is disposed of, would commit an act for which he would deserve to be impeached.—The calamities of this country come so thick that still some new one presses on, all the consequences of misfortune cannot be calculated. The measure which it has now become necessary to sanction is attended with many aggravating circumstances. Among the dividends already due there are many which have not actually been received. Suppose that a dividend had become due on the 5th of January, and that the person having no immediate use for the money, allows it to remain in the Bank, relying on the faith of government that it is actually paid. Government, however, like Lady Townley in the play, cries, "Stop, don't pay that money, I have other purposes to serve with it," and because it has the key of the chest where it is deposited, in violation of all faith and honour, seizes on the cash which had in reality been paid, and gives something else for which specie cannot be obtained. If such be the necessity, surely any situation is preferable to this. Whatever may be the temporary consequences to individual traders, or to general commerce, can they be put in balance with avowed bankruptcy, with flagrant breach of faith and undisguised robbery? As a confirmation of the Order of Council has become necessary, I shall not negative the measure proposed by the right honourable gentleman. With respect to the enquiry, I think that the mode by secret Committee ought not to be adopted. The right honourable gentleman says, that I had no objection to a secret Committee; as to the enquiry into the quantity of cash the Bank had, I had no objection that the enquiry should be conducted by a secret Committee; but for enquiry into the causes of the necessity, I was against that
kind

kind of Committee. I likewise thought a secret Committee better than none ; a secret Committee I conceive to be, that where none but those who compose it are admitted, and that it contains a warning, that certain things may come before it not fit to be divulged. But I shall take the sense of the House upon the point, whether the former Committee shall be revived. I shall not repeat the arguments used formerly against a Committee by ballot, they apply in all their force to the present case. After all that has been said of the dignity of the House, and the cant of minorities, I am warranted by history and experience in saying, that a Committee by ballot is always nominated by the Minister, and I think the House ought to perceive that this is not a moment for such practices. It is to the negligence of Parliament about its best privileges, it is to that confidence which it has so fatally bestowed, that after being driven to the necessity of sanctioning an act of bankruptcy, we are for the first time to enquire into the state of our affairs.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said a few words in explanation.

Colonel Porter said, he would ask, whether a Committee appointed by House lists, was that which ought to conduct an enquiry, upon which the salvation of the country depended ?

Lord Hawkebury said, he was sensible that the subject now under the discussion of the House, was of a nature the most delicate and important that could possibly be agitated ; and the greater was its delicacy and importance, the greater, in his opinion, ought to be the attention bestowed on it, and the calmer investigation it ought to undergo. He could not, therefore, forbear expressing his surprize at the warm language that fell from the right honourable gentleman opposite him (*Mr. Fox*). It was asserted that night, and on former occasions, by that right honourable gentleman, that the country, from the nature of its present circumstances, was in a state of bankruptcy ; but in no point of view was the term bankruptcy applicable to the present condition of the country. The term was not applicable to it either in point of law, or of common reason. A mere stoppage of payment could not surely be considered with justice as an act of bankruptcy, when it is proved beyond a doubt, that there are substantial funds and real resources far exceeding what was necessary to answer every just demand of creditors. Such, he was happy to find, was the present situation of the Bank,

from whatever causes its temporary embarrassment might be supposed to arise. The embarrassments were principally imputed to the scarcity or want of specie. But were this the truth, did it therefore follow that the Bank was poor? Undoubtedly not. Money, it is well known, cannot justly be regarded as wealth; it is only the representative of wealth; it even not unfrequently happens, that this scarcity of specie may be most experienced, when solid wealth is most considerably increased.

And indeed, if we but duly attend to what constitutes real wealth, and estimate it on any one criterion, it will be found that our present circumstances, instead of depressing us with despondency, should invigorate our hopes, and that we have no reason to despair, but, on the contrary, every reason to be satisfied. For if we examine into the usual causes that may be supposed to produce temporary difficulties, similar to those in which we now seem to be involved, it will be difficult to trace our embarrassments to any of them; if we look to our internal, or our foreign trade, it will scarce be found to have ever been more flourishing, nor does this assertion now call for any proof; it has already been demonstrated by such a variety of evidence, that it would now be superfluous to adduce any. Indeed there is no one criterion to which we can resort, but what abundantly proves the sufficiency of our funds and the solidity of our resources.—However our credit may now seem to be transiently affected by a scarcity of specie, if we look to the price of land, we find it higher than at any period of any former war. What therefore, may have occasioned the present want of specie, it was not his intention elaborately to enquire. In the first place, it might be attributed to the extent of our paper currency, and to the enormous quantity of imaginary capital now floating in the country. But did this rationally account for it? Surely not. For the industry of the country was not set at work by specie, but by the credit of the individual, whether banker or manufacturer, who held out employment and encouragement to industrious hands. It might with more reason be ascribed to the enormous increase of our trade and commerce; the sudden disappearance of specie might also be imputed to the dread of an invasion, or to any other panic that may have causelessly seized on the public mind; but these were surmises, on which it was not his intention any longer to dwell. It was his Lordship's wish rather to meet the argument principally insisted on by the right honourable Gentleman.
(Mr.

(Mr. Fox). That honourable Gentleman seemed very deliberately to assert that it was the interest of the public that our paper currency should be diminished. To corroborate this assertion, he instituted a comparison between a private trader and the Bank of England; but most assuredly in no one point of view can they be fairly and justly compared. The Bank of England should be regarded as the centre of all our commerce, and should any diminution or detriment affect this spring and finew of our commercial energies, our commercial wealth must be proportionally impaired. Nay, the arguments of the right honourable Gentleman tended directly to affect what he seems so anxious to preserve. By diminishing the revenue, you surely cannot increase public credit; and by cramping the circulation of paper currency, you contract the sphere of our commercial pursuits; and by this effect the public at large, and the public creditors, will be more materially injured, than in the other suppositions that have been stated. It might be prudent and wise, he confessed, to extend the operation of Lord George Saville's laws, and thus secure a larger profusion of specie in the country. But though this were effected, it would not follow that our paper circulation should be diminished: such a diminution would be attended with the most pernicious consequences, and prove far more prejudicial to the public creditor, and to public credit, than any of the cases so strongly urged by the right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox).

His Lordship concluded by recommending the consideration of our present difficulties to the attention of the House, as a matter of the greatest delicacy and importance; and he contended, that those very difficulties arose from no other causes, but such as were intimately connected with the real wealth and prosperity of the country.

The *Solicitor General* said he agreed with the noble Lord who spoke last, that specie was not the only indication of the wealth of a state or of an individual; there might be many cases in which it would be manifest, on the examination of his affairs, that an individual was extremely rich, although at the time of that examination that individual was not in the actual possession of a single shilling. From the manner in which commerce was now carried on, it was impossible that specie should be the only representative of wealth or property. If every man was to make a demand upon his debtor of payment in specie, of what was due to him, there would be found but few individuals in this commercial

country who would be able to discharge their debts; very few indeed who had any extensive dealings in trade. That was the case with the Bank at the present moment, but it was unfair to call the stoppage of payment in specie a bankruptcy; the Bank might be, and was, solvent, and even very rich, although they were at this moment unable to pay all demands upon them in cash. He apprehended also, that this non-payment of Bank notes with cash could not be called a fraud, because the public knew perfectly well that from circumstances, this was an event which might happen. He apprehended that the measure which had been adopted by Government, and pursued by the Bank, was a measure of wise and salutary precaution, well calculated to prevent a great evil. If a number of people were in a great theatre, and there was a false alarm of fire given, he apprehended that the door-keepers could not do better than to prevent the people going out in large parties in great hurry, but should endeavour to let them go out only by degrees, or were they even to shut them in for a time, he apprehended that would be the means of preventing a much greater evil. Such he considered to be the tendency of the present stoppage of payment at the Bank in cash at this moment. A very large demand was made at almost every banking-house in the kingdom, and particularly at the Bank, for payment in cash, and this sudden demand it was which created this temporary difficulty and embarrassment. It was well known that if at any time the whole of the creditors of the Bank should demand payment in cash of all that was due to them, it would be impossible for the Bank to comply with such demands. So it was with every considerable banker, merchant, or trader in the kingdom; but inability thus to pay in cash did not by any means prove insolvency. If the run which lately took place upon the Bank for the payment in cash had been permitted to continue, the ruin of the Bank must have followed very soon. If every creditor was to insist upon having cash in that manner, the consequence must have very speedily been that no cash would have been left at the Bank; and therefore the step which Government took upon this occasion, was a step to prevent the total ruin of the Bank, and with it the ruin of public credit, for the ruin of public credit must have been the consequence of leaving the Bank without any money at all, but that evil had been averted by the measure which had been adopted.

Gentlemen

Gentlemen had said much of the public creditor. Were they not aware that the holder of a Bank note, or a person who had demands upon the Bank, was not the only public creditor of this country? There were other public creditors, to whose convenience it became us to be attentive: he meant the army and the navy. He apprehended them to be as much public creditors as the holders of Bank notes could be; and their situation was such as particularly to require payment of what was due to them in cash, more so than any other description of men in this country. If, therefore, what was lately going on at the Bank was such as would very soon have left them without any specie, and that therefore they would have been disabled altogether from paying any more in that manner, Government were called upon to take the measure they had taken. It was a measure which was so far from being inconsistent with public faith, that it had for its object the preservation and maintenance of public faith. Much had been said on the constitution of the Bank of England. It was not for the holder of Bank stock only that such constitution was formed, and that was declared in the Charter of the Bank. It was instituted, as every other corporation was, for public purposes and benefits. The benefit of the holder of stock was an inferior object. The Bank, from the very nature of its charter, was bound to accommodate the nation; and, therefore, when it was said that the Bank had a duty to the holder of stock, it should be remembered they had a duty also to the public, which on occasion of public emergency it was essential they should perform, for that was the great object of their institution, and if they did not perform the public purposes for which they were instituted, the power which created might also destroy them. All their original power was granted to them for public purposes, and, upon every principle on which they were created, they might also be destroyed, if they were guilty of any thing that amounted to a breach of that public duty. The Bank therefore must assist the Government of the country. He apprehended it to be their duty so to do when any occasion required it, and he apprehended it to be particularly their duty in the present instance. From these observations he was led to say, that all the illustrations which had been made by comparing the condition of the Bank to that of a private banker, were without foundation.

As to the subject of the eleven millions now due from Government to the Bank, the Committee would recollect how that originated. It originated in a description of certain individuals, for which there was to be an interest at the rate of 3 per

per cent. and that deposit was held afterwards by Government as a pledge for the payment of Bank notes, and was a security for the payment of demands that might be made upon the Bank; that sum was from time to time encreased, until it amounted to eleven millions and upwards, upon which an annuity of 3 per cent. was paid to the holder of Bank stock, to which a dividend of 3 per cent. more had been added. But the right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) was wrong in his calculation upon that subject. It was difficult to estimate the precise value of that stock, but according to the price which it now bore, he apprehended it would produce, if sold, between 15 and 16 millions, for this was not to be considered only as a capital, but, if sold, there would go with it the good-will of the trade, and therefore it was worth very considerably more than the 11 millions capital stock. If put up to sale he believed the sum which it would fetch, would be, as he had said already, between 15 and 16 millions. This proved not only the solvency, but the very considerable surplus which the Bank had, over and above even what the Committee had stated them to possess. He must now recur to the necessity of issuing the Order in Council. It was clear, that however affluent the Bank actually were, they could not pay all demands upon them in specie, because they could not convert their property into specie, and it would be impossible for commerce to go on if the Bank was drained of all its specie; this specie could not return until the course of commerce should bring it back again to the Bank. Whether the measure which was adopted by Government was a wise measure or not, was foreign to this part of the argument, but he maintained that it was so far from being a breach of faith, that it enabled the Bank to keep their faith with the public. The consideration before the Committee was, whether the measure should or should not be continued? and it did not appear to him that there was any difference of opinion upon that point. Some other measures might be suggested as a remedy in the present case; but the only one he had heard mentioned was, that of payment of the debt due from the public to the Bank. A considerable part of that was a floating debt of advance upon the produce of taxes, which was continually coming in, and which debt was therefore in the course of reducing itself. He apprehended that we should not reduce the number of Bank notes, for we wanted them as a circulating medium; and if an attempt was made to bring them nearly upon a level with the quantity, not of the property, but the cash of the Bank, we might expect to see the Bank soon without notes, or without cash sufficient to carry on

on the purposes of commerce. He apprehended, if this necessary restriction was continued for a reasonable time, the course of trade would bring specie back again, and then the embarrassment would be over.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that if he had not known the Minister pretty well, and known that many of his adherents carried their system much further than their leader, he should have been more astonished at the present plan than he was, even desperate as that plan was; if the speeches of the noble Lord, and the learned Gentleman who had just spoken, had conveyed the sentiments of the Minister, and if we were to follow them, then indeed there could be nothing so desperate as the situation to which we are reduced, in reasoning as well as in finance. According to one of these orators, a forced paper currency was better than specie, and our commerce will encrease greatly in proportion as we violate the principles of honesty in paying our public debts. He thought that paper was only a good thing while we had the means of converting it into cash; but the noble Lord thought it not only a cleaner, neater, and more portable and convenient medium to represent property, but the very essence of wealth itself, even when it could not be converted into specie, and that the flourishing state of our commerce was the cause of this inability to produce specie to answer demands upon the Bank of England. Really, until he heard such nonsense, he could not possibly have concluded that any such would been uttered in that House. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, although he could not countenance, had given birth to this kind of reasoning; and he wished, for his convenience, he could carry it into practice. What a pleasant thing it would be, to be able to shew from day to day, that the inability of the Government to discharge the demands that were made upon it, was owing to the enormous increase of its wealth! What an entertainment it would be to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to sit in his office and to receive all collectors of the revenue in all its branches, of customs, excise, and all the other taxes of this country, who should tell him they had all been out and had done their duty most diligently, but that the capital of every man on whom they intended to levy taxes, was so enormously encreased, that they were not any of them enabled to pay a single shilling! and yet such arguments from the collector of taxes could not be more absurd, than the arguments that had been urged that night. The evil, which was now the subject of complaint, had been apprehended to arise from one of two causes; perhaps from both. The one was, that enormous sums of money had been sent

sent abroad, the other, that men had been alarmed and had locked up vast quantities of specie in their coffers; and for this evil, it was supposed, to issue an enormous quantity of paper would be a remedy. Those who thought so, he would venture to say, did not understand the nature of the evil.

The learned gentleman had entered into the nature of the constitution of the Bank. He told gentlemen opposite to him, that they were extremely ignorant of the nature of the constitution of the Bank; he told them they mistook the meaning of the act of the 5th of King William, and that that act did not constitute the Charter of the Bank for the private purposes of paying its creditors, but for the public purpose of assisting Government; and that, if they did not answer this original and public purpose, the same power which created might also destroy them—a pretty good threat, and a little more intelligible than had ever before been given them. It so happened, that the very learned gentleman who has accused others of being ignorant of the constitution of the Bank, had not, he was convinced he had not, read one syllable of the constitution of the Bank; if he had, he could not have uttered such gross and palpable absurdities about it. The Bank instituted to accommodate Government! No such thing, nor any thing like it. They lent the money to which the learned gentleman alluded, and which was now said to have accumulated to eleven millions, for a particular advantage which they purchased by so lending; but so far was it from being considered at that time, that it was to be the duty of the Bank to lend money to Government in future, whenever Government might apply for it, or when Government might want it, that the very act of Parliament expressed an apprehension of evil effects from too great a facility in lending money from the Bank to Government, and therefore provided against it; and therefore the act expressed, that no money should be advanced by the Bank to Government, except upon sums that shall have been previously voted by Parliament, and this was prohibited under a penalty of treble the sum advanced, to be forfeited by the Directors who should so advance it; so that this act, by which their constitution was created, had it in view that the Bank should never become what the present Government had endeavoured to make it, too successfully, the mere tool and engine of the King's Ministers. And here, he said, it was impossible for him to abstain from adverting to the manner in which the provisions of this salutary act have been got rid of. This being the law of the land, the Bank Directors would be bound to observe it, but, at the commencement of this war, a Bill was brought in
tq

to do away the effect of the act altogether; not indeed under that title, nor was there any notice of any such intention, but a clause was smuggled into an act of Parliament, avowedly brought in for another purpose, by which clause that provision in the act of King William, which prohibited the Bank making any advances to Government upon any but sums expressly voted by Parliament, was repealed. The Directors had before that time advanced money to Government against law; they were indemnified for that illegal act, and were enabled to do so hereafter; for that wholesome provision of the act of King William, by which they were forbidden to do it, was now repealed: that repeal was the cause of our present calamity. Immediately after this, one million five hundred thousand pounds was advanced by the Bank to Government, and was paid into the treasury; and now the House would consider how well the learned Gentleman, who had accused others of ignorance of the original constitution of the Bank of England, himself understood that original constitution. But here again he must clear himself from any imputation of having said any thing against the solvency of the Bank. He blamed the Bank for the servility with which they obeyed the illegal Order in Council. How far that Order would hereafter turn out to be wise was another question. He said nothing against the accommodation which the Bank had given to the public; on the contrary, he believed that their discounts had been of service to commerce at large. His observation was this: that if they knew their former discounts would not be good unless they continued to discount, the bills which they had already discounted could not be taken as assets in their hands to the full amount of such discounts; and therefore the Committee was not justified in considering such bills as assets in the hands of the Bank to their full amount. Gentlemen misunderstood him; he did not mean to say the Bank was insolvent; he only found fault with the manner in which this matter was stated. He did not blame the Committee for this; it was a mere oversight, for which they were excusable; no man would suppose that he should be eager to blame a report which was the unanimous opinion of a Committee, when one of its members (Mr. Grey) was a person for whom he had so much esteem, and who, he knew, would never spare himself any trouble while he had a hope that his exertions would be serviceable to the public. But his duty demanded of him these observations, for this report, unless understood as he had stated it, would mislead the public as to the real assets in the hands of the Bank.

With regard to the debt of eleven millions from Government to the Bank, the learned Gentleman had made an enormous calculation of its value; he had stated it to be worth for sale near sixteen millions. It was no such thing, unless Government chused to make them a present of it. It was only an annuity of three hundred and thirty thousand a year, no part of the capital of which could the Bank be entitled to from Government for sixteen years. In this interval they could have only 330,000l. a year. There was also a statement in the report, which if not looked into would mislead the public. So far was there from being eleven millions as assets this day in the hands of the Bank, it would not amount to six millions. But this was only an observation on the mistaken description of the assets in the hands of the Bank, in which the report described that to be five, and the learned Gentleman about ten millions more than it was worth. This mistake of the Committee arose from not specifying the nature of the debt from Government to the Bank; and the mistake of the learned Gentleman arose from not recollecting that, in this, Bank stock 4 per cent. dividend had been added to the original 3 per cent. interest.

But it seemed, from the observations of the learned Gentleman, that the holders of Bank notes are not the only creditors of the public; there are others whose claims are of superior exigency—the army and the navy. That soldiers coming from barracks, where they can learn no sympathy with the public in any calamity, with arms in their hands, and who have to deal with a Government whose system they know to be terror, should be duns, and pretty successful duns, he was ready to admit, because it was likely; but that their claims upon the Bank of England for specie was superior to the property of stock, or the holders of Bank paper, was a proposition which he begged leave to deny; nor did it appear that the Bank thought so previous to the issuing of this Order in Council. He apprehended that the first duty of the Bank was to keep faith with its own creditors, for that was the way for them to fulfil the trust that was reposed in them, and a deviation from which was a public breach of faith. But it seemed they were in no case to refuse to accommodate the public by aiding Government. They had never done so, and if they should, they forfeited their charter. How stood that fact? Did they not actually refuse, in the year 1783, in an instalment upon the loan, by which refusal stocks fell 14 or 15 per cent. but no man told them then, that, for that refusal, they should have their charter wrested out of their hands. The question

question was, Whether the Bank had not exceeded their duty upon this occasion? and that was a question which the House should have clearly stated before them on the face of the transaction, to form a clear judgment upon it. There was an assertion of the Minister, that this was necessary; but there was no evidence of that; and how could the House proceed to give a legislative sanction to that, of the necessity of which there was no proof before them? It was stated, that if Government were to pay the Bank five millions the next day, it would not relieve them from the present pressure. Why not? Could they not purchase bullion with it? Really this mode of stating difficulties he did not understand. But this was a system fraught with the most dreadful evils; it was of the same complexion as that which laid the foundation of the ruin of the French finances, and led to all the horrors which have been so much deplored there. The measure of the act in Council to stop the payment of the Bank, was as violent as if it had been directed to any banker or private individual to lay hold of the cash in his coffers, and to rob him of it, under the pretence that it was intended for the public use. The Minister told us the Committee had not reported enough upon this subject. He agreed with him they had not; there needed no ghost to come from the grave to tell what we all knew already; and certainly they had told nothing which we did not all know already. He did not, however, see that Ministers had laid before the House any ground for a Bill. What need had they of a Bill, while it was notorious they would proceed without it, and as notorious that the Bank would obey them? If they acted illegally, he thought they ought to be left to their peril; there was no reason why the House should aid them, since they did not condescend to give any proof of the necessity of their measure. They had shewn they could commit robbery, and as they did not offer any evidence of the necessity of any one thing, why should the House give them leave to bring in a Bill to indemnify themselves? They ought, in his opinion, to be left to themselves; to go on in their own way, without the sanction of Parliament. He warned the House of the effect of giving to Ministers this facility of breaking the public faith. It would only encourage them to treat all thought of responsibility with contempt, and there was no possibility of knowing where their desperation would end. He believed that we should not long be able, after the inundation of paper to which this system gave birth, to stop them from making Bank notes legal tender; and then adieu to the appearance of specie at the Bank, and soon afterwards to the real value of a Bank note. These

ideas pressed very much upon his mind ; but as he always wished to give way to the opinion of his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox), who thought it proper that leave should be given to bring in this Bill, he should not divide the House upon the present question ; but in the stages of this proceeding he should have motions that should go with it *pari passu*.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* made a short reply to the arguments of Mr. Sheridan, in which he said, that the material question for the Committee was, whether they would allow an act, confessedly illegal, to continue without being sanctioned by the legislature ? They would do him the justice to say, that he had explicitly declared that their confirmation of the measure should not be considered as an implied vindication of the conduct of Ministers in issuing the Minute of Council, or of the Bank for obeying it. He disclaimed, for himself, all such interpretation of the Bill now proposed. The necessity of it was generally acknowledged, and the whole question was only, Whether the measure should now stand without law or by law ? A good deal of allusion had been made to the advances of the Bank to Government, as chiefly creating the necessity for the Minute of Council of the 26th of February. To whatever degree those advances might have contributed to that necessity would be a subject for future discussion ; but, in the mean time, he must again repeat, that those advances were not peculiar to the period of his administration, but had been going on for a great length of time, and had not been felt to be any hardship or inconvenience to the Bank. A considerable part of them were floating advances, under the title of anticipation of land and malt, of Exchequer bills which were issued from time to time, and the Bank received these advances back again gradually as the revenue came in. But the whole of this would be matter for discussion when the Secret Committee, which he proposed to be revived, should make their report to the House.

Mr. Fox said, that in differing from his honourable friend (Mr. Sheridan) as to the propriety of voting for the introduction of this Bill, it was a difference merely as to propriety, and not to principle. He believed it to be impossible that they should ever differ upon any constitutional principle whatever. It was certainly most true, that in passing this Bill they were to enact robbery and fraud ; for robbery and fraud it was in direct and heinous characters ; but the measure of the 26th of February had made it an imperious necessity that the illegal Order of the Council, which had been illegally obeyed, should now be continued for a limited time by the force of a statute.

They

They were in truth deprived of the powers of deliberation. However wantonly the measure of the 26th of February had been adopted, its execution made a necessity for its continuance. All the other arguments of his honourable friend he fully adopted; and again he must repeat, that in giving his assent to the introduction of this Bill, he neither, passed an indemnity on the council for issuing the Order, nor on the Bank for obeying it.

The reasons given by the learned Gentleman (the Solicitor General) in justification of the measure, and his description of the character of the Bank, were additional alarms to his mind, and would give very serious alarms to the country. According to his doctrine, the public establishment of the Bank was the creature of Government, over which they might exercise whatever power the policy of the moment might dictate, for it was originally created for their use, and to be obedient to their pleasure. What an idea to put forth to the country!—Not content with this general doctrine, which identified the Bank with Government, he had gone further, and had justified the interference of the state, by asserting that the stopping of the money of individuals was a measure of wisdom, useful even to the creditors themselves, because it ultimately tended to their security?—According to this doctrine they might dispense with all the laws which had been enacted for the security of the national creditor, on the mere pretext that they thereby consulted his ultimate safety. On this pretext they might lay a tax upon the funds the next day, though the law had secured them to be paid in money to the creditors; but this new reason of policy would justify the proceeding by informing the creditors that they had no other means of providing for their security. He deprecated all these false and fatal doctrines, all these deviations from the simplicity of rectitude, from the morals of the constitution. They were as detestable in their character as they must be ineffectual in their practice. They would serve only to plunge us in ignominy as they precipitated us to ruin, and leave us bankrupts in fame, as well as fortune. Such ever must be the consequence of stratagems that counteracted principles. It was not merely to be ascribed to the impotence of the present Minister that all his expedients for the last fourteen months had only tended to aggravate the calamity which they affected to cure; it belonged to the incapacity of human nature whenever man attempted by subterfuges, arts, and contrivances,

vances, to counteract the eternal and invariable principles of truth and justice; he never failed to expose his presumptuous folly, and to entangle himself more and more in the labyrinth of error. It was wonderful that the right honourable Gentleman, looking back to the success of all his inventions, should still have confidence in his own powers, or in any powers; as if it were possible for the united wisdom of mankind, by stratagems and expedients, to prevail over the certain effects of an expenditure, beyond the powers and ability of the nation.

Mr. *W. Smith* acknowledged that he entertained no doubts as to the solvency of the Bank; but he could by no means agree with the Solicitor General in his statement of the constitution of the Bank. The original subscribers had not in his opinion, the public service in view so much as their own pecuniary interests; and every subsequent act which had been passed, by which money had been borrowed from the Bank, shewed that the ideas of Parliament corresponded with this opinion, and contradicted the argument of the learned Gentleman. Parliament had never assumed a dictatorial controul over the pecuniary concerns of the Bank. Terms on which money was proposed to be borrowed, had repeatedly been offered to the Governor and company, but had never been imposed upon them. Mr. Smith denied that the Governors of the Bank were warranted to sacrifice the interest of the Bank proprietors to that of the public; as good patriots, and in point of national policy they might, indeed, be induced to run some risks for the public good, but the immediate object with which they were entrusted, and which they were immediately bound to take care of, was the interest of the proprietors of Bank stock. The premium which the Bank gave to the public for the renewal of its charter, was not to compromise its interests with the public, but it was a benefit conferred on the latter, in virtue of which the directors were empowered to pursue the concerns of the Bank, as might be most for the interest of the proprietors. Mr. Smith declared, that if the act which had been forced upon the Bank by the Order of Council, had been the company's own act and deed, it could never have recovered the shock; but, as it was, he had little doubt but it would retrieve its credit. Not that he considered the City Association of merchants as any criterion, or proof of the credit in which the Bank stood with the public, for he averred that that Association would have signed the paper they did, even

even if they had known that the Bank would not pay, because they knew they wanted discounts continually, and that the Bank must furnish them with those discounts, and that it was at all events their interest to support the Bank.

Sir *John Sinclair* proposed to leave out the words "to confirm," and to make the title of the Bill only to continue the measure of the Council.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the word "confirm" was essential, as the measure itself had been confessedly illegal.

The motion was then put for leave to bring in the bill, which was carried without a division.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved, that the Secret Committee for enquiring into the affairs of the Bank, &c. be revived.

Mr. *Fox* said, that he should certainly give his negative to the revival of this Committee, constituted as it had been. He had given his reasons plainly. A Committee to enquire into the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers in a measure that struck a blow at the vitals of the country, from which perhaps all the wisdom and energy of the nation would be unequal to recover us, was not the sort of Committee which either would or ought to satisfy the nation. This was not a time to sport with measures of enquiry; this was not a time to shelter any set of Ministers under abuses that were disgraceful to Parliament. It was a thing notorious that a ballot was a shameful stratagem by which a Minister appointed his own judges. There was a servility in that House in the last Parliament which had enabled the Minister to evade all enquiry, and it was notorious that that servility went the length of adopting one general list of names prepared and packed for the purpose of a ballot. The Committee which it was proposed to revive had been so appointed, to such a Committee he must object, and he should take their sense upon the question. At the same time he thought it necessary to state, that if he should succeed in delivering the House from the obloquy of obedience to the right hon. Gentleman's motion, he should certainly propose a Committee for the same purposes, to be appointed by nomination.

Mr. *Grey* said that he felt a delicacy on the present subject, which he was desirous to state before they proceeded to the question. It was perfectly understood, that the nature of a Secret Committee of that House went only to impose
upon

upon its members that degree of secrecy on the matters that came before them, which their own discretion might think proper. There was no obligation of secrecy. It was not any divulging of the matter that came before them to say that a majority of the Committee were of opinion that the measure of the 26th of February was called for by necessity, and that the causes of the predicament justified government in the measure. He, however, did not agree with the majority; he was not satisfied with the evidence which satisfied them; he wanted a more circumstantial enquiry, in which they did not acquiesce. The result of this difference of opinion was, that they finally agreed upon the report on the table, in which they had avoided all words that tended to give any opinion as to the necessity or the causes that produced it. He submitted to the Committee with what propriety, or to what good purpose, this Committee could be revived, or at least why his name should be left on it. The majority that had been convinced without further enquiry, would be convinced still, and he who could not deliver up his conscience and his honour, must retain the opinion which he had formed on the deliberate examination of all that had been brought before them.

Mr. *Bastard* desired to know if any member of the Committee might not be omitted or changed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that by rules of Parliament, they must have upon this motion the whole or none.

Mr. *Dent* desired to know of Mr. *Grey* why, if he was not satisfied with the evidence that had been brought before them, he had not called for more?

Mr. *Grey* answered, that that was a question which he must put to the majority of the Committee. He was not satisfied, they were.

Mr. *Dent* could not see that this was an answer to his question. Why did he not persevere in demanding more enquiry?

Mr. *Grey* said, he must address these questions to his friends on the Treasury bench.

After a few more words, the Committee divided.

Ayes,	—	—	—	174
Noes,	—	—	—	65
				—
Majority.		—		109

The Secret Committee was therefore revived.

Mr.

Mr. *Sheridan* then renewed the motion which he had made before, that the right honourable Charles James Fox be added to the Committee. He did it, he said, from the persuasion that his unparalleled talents and established integrity would point him out to all England as the man to whom an enquiry so important ought to be committed. He was sure that, if the Bank themselves had the nomination, they would be eager to enrol his name in the list, that they might give character and credit to the report.

The Committee divided.

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	60
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	157
		<i>Majority</i>	97

The House was then resumed.

Mr. *Douglas* brought up the report of the motion for leave to bring in the bill for confirming and continuing the stoppage of payment in money at the Bank of England, and the motion for the revival of the Secret Committee. They were confirmed.

List of the Minority on Mr. WHITEHEAD'S Motion for an enquiry into the conduct of Ministers with regard to the late attempt of the French to invade Ireland.

Thomas Anson, Esq.	Aldborough.
Sir John Aubrey, Bt.	Bridport.
Geo. Barclay, Esq.	Devonshire, County.
John Pollexfen Bastard, Esq.	Richmond.
Charles Geo. Beauclerk, Esq.	Herefordshire, County.
Robert Biddulph, Esq.	Northampton.
Hon. Edward Bouverie,	Launceston.
James Brogden, Esq.	Thetford.
Joseph Randall Burch, Esq.	Boroughbridge.
Sir Francis Burdett, Bt.	Middlesex, County.
Geo. Byng, Esq.	Norfolk, County.
Sir R. Clayton, Bt.	London, City.
Tho. Wm. Coke, Esq.	Tregony.
Alderman Combe,	Appleby.
Sir Lionel Copley, Bt.	Cheshire, County.
John Courtenay, Esq.	
John Crewe, Esq.	
L. Damer, Esq.	
Wm. Joseph Denison, Esq.	Camelford.

Sir Henry Fletcher, Bt.	Cumberland, County.
Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox.	Westminster.
Vif. Galway,	Pontefract.
James Greene, Esq.	Arundel.
Charles Grey, Esq.	Northumberland, County.
James Hare, Esq.	Knareborough.
John Harrison, Esq.	Thetford.
Henry Howard, Esq.	
Jervoise Clark Jervoise, Esq.	Yarmouth.
John Langston, Esq.	Minehead.
French Lawrence, Esq.	
Sir Wm. Lemon, Bt.	Cornwall, County.
James Martin Lloyd, Esq.	Steyning.
Lord Morpeth,	
Sir Wm. M. Milner, Bt.	York.
Lord Milton,	
John Nicholls, Esq.	Tregony.
Dudley North, Esq.	Banbury.
Wm. Northey, Esq.	Newport.
Henry Pierse, Esq.	Northallerton.
John Geo. Phillips, Esq.	Caermarthen.
Geo. Porter, Esq.	Stockbridge.
Hon. John Rawdon,	Launceston.
Joseph Richardson, Esq.	Newport.
Sir Matthew White Ridley, Bt.	Newcastle.
Lord John Russell,	Tavistock.
Lord Wm. Russell,	Surrey, County.
Hon. St. John St. Andrew,	Bedfordshire, County.
Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq.	Stafford.
George Shum, Esq.	Honiton.
S. Sitwell, Esq.	
Wm. Smith, Esq.	Sudbury.
Lord Robert Spencer,	Wareham.
Lord Stanley,	Preston.
Charles Sturt, Esq.	Bridport.
Geo. Tierney, Esq.	Southwark.
Lord John Townshend,	Knareborough.
Hon. Henry Tufton,	Rocheſter.
Sir F. Fletcher Vane, Bt.	Carlisle.
James Walwyn, Esq.	Hereford.
Sir Edward Winnington, Bt.	Droitwich.
Earl Wycombe,	Chipping Wyeombe.

TELLERS.

TELLERS.

Samuel Whitbread, Esq.
General Tarleton,

Bedford.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, *March 10.*

The royal assent was given by commission to the Marine Mutiny bill, and to Mr. Wilberforce Bird's bill, for discontinuing for a limited time, the restrictions in the acts of 15 and 17 Geo. III. on manufacturers, traders, &c. and issuing Promissory notes below a certain sum; also to several private bills.

The Earl of *Albemarle* moved that the order for the motion for an enquiry into the naval defence of Ireland, which stood for Monday next, be discharged, and that the same be fixed for Thursday next, ordered, and that their Lordships be summoned.

Adjourned to Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *March 10.*

Read a third time the bill for regulating his Majesty's Marine forces while on shore.

The bill for altering, explaining and amending the Scotch Quota bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday next.

PROMULGATION OF THE STATUTES.

Mr. *Abbot* said, that the Committee appointed to enquire into the best mode for promulgating statutes, &c. had prepared a report, which it was proper to submit to the House, and therefore he moved, that the House do on that day se'nnight resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of the best mode for promulgating the statutes—Ordered.

The bill for regulating trade and commerce with America was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on Monday next.

COMMITTEE ON STATE OF THE NATION.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that, in pursuance of what he had stated on a former day, he had now several

points to which he would call the attention of the House, and which he intended to have submitted to its consideration, but was prevented by the lateness of the hour which other objects of discussion led to. His object was, to refer to a Committee an examination into the total amount of the public debt and the interest due thereon, and the various charges, as they stood on the 5th of January, 1797, distinguishing what part of them arose since the year 1793; and also the produce of four years' taxes, distinguishing each year for defraying such charges as they arose within such period, and for such Committee to report these matters, together with their observations thereon, to the House; and likewise to state the amount of any unfunded debt that remained on the 5th of January, 1797; as also to state the total amount of the public expence incurred for the year 1798, as far as the accounts can be made up, together with what provision has been already made for defraying it.—Should the House agree with him in the propriety of referring these considerations to a Committee, as from what had been already said, he apprehended there would be no doubt it would, he should bring that motion up with others; such as, that the Committee should be a secret one, for the purpose of examining as far, and with as little delay as possible, into all the branches of public income and expenditure. He therefore moved, “That it be referred to a Secret Committee to examine into the total amount of the public debt, with the interest due thereon, and all public charges, as they stood on the 5th of January, 1797; distinguishing what part arose since the year 1793, and the produce of the four years preceding; and also the produce of the several taxes imposed for defraying the charges of each year within the several periods, and to report the same with their opinion thereon to the House. And likewise to examine into, and state the amount of any unfunded debt outstanding on the 5th of January, 1797; and also to calculate the total amount of the expences incurred for the year 1798, as far as they can be made up, and to state the same, as it shall appear to them, to the House, together with the provisions that have been made for defraying the same.”

The motion was put and carried.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved, that the said Committee be chosen by way of ballot.

Mr *Sheridan* said that after what had already passed upon the subject of the Committees, he was surprized that the
Minister

Minister should persevere in having a Committee appointed by ballot. He hoped it was entirely unnecessary for him to say that neither himself, nor any of his honourable friends, intended to offer any disrespectful expression to any member of the last Committee that was chosen by ballot. No such thing was intended. But the fact that a ballot was the means of the Minister packing his friends together to make a report upon his conduct, was too notorious to the whole country. That such a Committee was made up of the Minister's own list, dictated to the majority who were to chuse, there was now no use in attempting to deny. A member had openly said the other day, when a list was put into his hand, "this is the House list." Every body understood perfectly what was meant by that; there was no possibility of garbling or of hindering it. This was the Minister's practice to screen himself. It was a breach of the privilege of that House. That this was notorious would appear from a fact that happened in the course of the debate on a former night. Before the names of the Committee were brought in and read to the House, he knew the members who would be chosen, for he read the whole list himself to the House, as a part of his speech, by way of anticipation of the result of the ballot; and they were chosen exactly as he had read them. Was not this a notorious fact? It was recorded on the Journals of the House. After so notorious an instance of packing a Committee, it was a little too barefaced a thing to recur to the same means. He would however again repeat that he meant no personal disrespect to any individual of the fifteen gentlemen who composed that Committee, but he contended that this was not a fair way of appointing them. He must however, be permitted to say, that they did not attend to the subject with the activity that might have been expected of them. They did not meet that morning. How could they discuss the whole of the subject which was to be submitted to them without taking into consideration the Order in Council which had so much conduced to bring about the situation which we are now in? And how could it in the nature of things be fair to send to them the consideration of that on which they had already given their judgment; and yet he had no doubt but they would make up the list of the Minister. Besides, this would retard the progress of the business, for many of the gentlemen who composed that Committee were gone into the country. Such attempts as these to screen the Minister were too gross and palpable, and
the

the whole country had already seen through the artifice. The House therefore, in defence of its own dignity, ought no longer to be parties in such tricking as this, but should proceed at once to chuse a Committee openly in the House.

The *Speaker* suggested the propriety of determining the number of the Committee before the question was put, how it should be chosen.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, " That the number of the said Committee be fifteen." Ordered.

He then moved, " That the said Committee be chosen by ballot."

Mr. *Grey* said, he objected to a Committee by ballot. His honourable friend had complained that the Committee did not meet that day. He owned he did not attend, but his absence was unavoidable. He believed that five gentlemen of that Committee were out of town.

Mr. *Pollen* said, this question was of great importance and general consideration. With regard to chusing a Committee by ballot, he must say, that he had a list put into his hand, but by whom he did not know. He considered of that list, and judged for himself. He did not consider that list as having any direct influence upon him. Some gentlemen, he was afraid, did give their opinions to others as to who should be chosen. He did not, however, consider that as direct influence. He was not very conversant in the characters of men in that House, and therefore he was obliged to any one who should give him a list of names, and he should afterwards judge for himself as well as he was able. He knew nothing of any treasury list. He should chuse who appeared to him to be best qualified. But, in order to do away all objections on this head, he should propose, that the House immediately proceed to chuse a Committee. He should think it unfair, after what had been said about influence, to take any list either from the Ministerial or Opposition side of the House; and therefore he should move an amendment to the motion, which was to insert the word " now."

Colonel *Porter* seconded the motion, as a just vindication of the dignity of the House. He thought it extremely improper that any lists should be given, and that no attempt whatever should be made to bias the judgment of any member of the House, and he could not help thinking that, if such influence was exercised, the House would lose the respect it ought to have with the public.

The question was then put, " That the said Committee be *now* chosen by ballot."

Mr.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, he was almost at a loss to know what to say upon this subject. He had heard of no idea of impunity imputed to any man specifically. Some gentlemen talked of danger as to the public opinion upon this, and others had regarded the proposal of a Committee by ballot as a breach of the privilege of the House. He really saw nothing of the kind. What harm was there in five or six people talking together upon the names of those who were to compose a Committee? By this sort of proceeding a man who had but just got out of his cradle would see it was impossible to carry on business if such captious objections as these were to stop the House. The doctrine against a ballot was one of the most extraordinary he ever heard. It was the first time he ever heard of its being an engine of influence. He had heard of the address, and eloquence, and art of his right honourable friend in deceiving the House, but he did not see how these complaints applied to a ballot. Every man was perfectly free upon a ballot; and if it was the object of gentlemen on the other side to have a right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) upon the Committee, he was perfectly sure he would stand as good a chance to be chosen by a ballot, as by being named in the House: he therefore considered this as a very ridiculous question. There was no personal objection to any one of the last Committee, and yet gentlemen complained of influence. It seemed to him to be a whimsical thing to object to a Committee by ballot, because the last, which was so chosen, was an unexceptionable one. He understood that gentlemen on the other side had their list of a Committee. Many of the names which had been stated to him were very respectable; but he had no objection to that list being published, and to let the world at large compare them with the former Committee, and judge who were the fittest persons for the business. According to the idea he had formed of the Committee of gentlemen on the other side, it would be a very strange Committee. In every view he had of the object, he saw no reason whatever for rejecting a ballot. Gentlemen talked of influence, as if it belonged merely to a ballot, and as if the understandings and dispositions of men would be different, according as their names were called over aloud or put into a glass. He had heard it said, that in choosing a Committee by open vote, there was room for influence, and that choosing by ballot was a cover for rascality; these were topics which he would not discuss. He thought it unfair to take the House as it now stood, to form such a Committee as this without notice. The House should in this case follow the old practice.

Mr.

Mr. *Courtney* wished to know what part of the House the right honourable Gentleman meant to compliment, when he said that a ballot was a cover for rascality? With respect to the list of gentlemen in opposition, he declared he had never heard of it.

Mr. *Sheridan* agreed with the right honourable Gentleman that a ballot might be a cover for rascality. He could not account for the right honourable Gentleman's hatred to ballots, thus expressed, but from his want of success in a ballot at the India House. But there had not been the same means used to influence the voters as there was about the House of Commons. He was not surprized at his speech at all, for that right honourable Gentleman was no hypocrite. He never knew him pretend to any principle. He had no cant; there was about him an avowed political profligacy which was ingenuous and candid. He did not say a word against influence; but what the House ought to do was, to counteract that influence by balloting directly, before the Minister could have time to exert it. The right honourable Gentleman had observed, that impunity might be ascribed to any gentleman who spoke to his next neighbour about a Committee, and appeared very anxious not to be suspected of impunity himself. The right honourable Gentleman, it was true, had got out of the cradle and nursery of politics; he had got away from school too; he had even gone through the political universities, and had since educated a number of young gentlemen in political learning; so that he might be said to be not only "*a scholar*," but "*a master of scholars*." Indeed, the right honourable Gentleman's innocence reminded him of a line in one of Dryden's plays, in which King Arthur falls in love with the appearance of a beautiful young lady, and Merlin the Enchanter coming to remove the spell, exclaims--

"Behold the maiden-moësty of Grimbald!"

After this play of fancy Mr. *Sheridan* proceeded in his arguments against the ballot; ridiculed the idea of the purity of those who contended for time to prepare for a ballot, and contended that the only chance for counteracting it was to proceed upon the business without delay, before there was any time for the Minister to exert his influence.

Mr. *J. H. Addington* said, he thought that the House should not be caught by surprise, and he apprehended it would be so if this motion was carried, for there were many gentlemen absent, who had no idea that a ballot would take place
that

that night, consequently the House could not come to a just decision. He thought that gentlemen should have time to give in their lists.

Mr. *Fox* thought the reason assigned against the motion by the honourable Gentleman who spoke last the most extraordinary he ever heard. That gentleman did not conceive what the House would determine. So that it was to take the House by surprise to carry any question against the Minister. With regard to the ballot, the only question was, Whether it was fit the Minister should nominate who he pleased upon it? for that would be the effect of giving him time to prepare.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* opposed the amendment. He considered the House not sufficiently attended to proceed to the ballot then, and that the decision upon it, if carried, might be the decision of a minority of those who wished to take a part. He saw no more impropriety in preparing lists, or one gentleman speaking to another upon a ballot, than there was in canvassing fairly at an election for a member to serve in Parliament, whereby the real sense of the electors was better known.

Mr. *Curwen* was decidedly in favour of the amendment. He thought the House could not be too eager to stop the influence of the Minister. Should the House come to a ballot now, there would be a chance of a Committee that would not adhere to the wishes of the Minister. This country was in the most awful situation it had ever experienced. Nothing could save it, if all descriptions of men did not unite their efforts for the public good. It was not by packing a Committee to screen the Minister the country could be saved from its impending ruin. There should be strict enquiry into our situation, and the subjects to be submitted to the Committee would involve every thing that might be necessary, if the Committee did their duty; but if it was the object to shelter the Minister, and to hide his misconduct, the nation might be soon undone. The Minister might triumph for awhile with his majority, but the people must soon be convinced that he has not talents sufficient to conduct our affairs at this important crisis.

Mr. *Barham* thought, from the speech of the Secretary of State, that he considered ministerial influence as a thing now to be submitted to at all events. He apprehended that, unless this Committee was fairly chosen, the public would cease to respect the House of Commons, or any of its proceedings. He thought the Minister ought to be glad to see his opponents on such a Committee as this, if he was conscious of having conducted himself properly. He verily believed that much of the

respect which the public had for the report of the last Committee was owing to the knowledge they had that some gentlemen, who usually voted against the Minister, were members of that Committee.

Mr. *Dundas* disclaimed the idea that ministerial influence was a thing to be submitted to. He only maintained, that if there was any influence apprehended, a ballot was the last mode to be looked to for the exertion of it.

Mr. *Yorke* thought the House would desert its duty, if it adopted any other mode than that of a ballot.

Mr. *Martin* thought that some reason should be given why this Committee should not be chosen as they were at the time of the unfortunate indisposition of his Majesty. This was a subject which, although not of the same nature, was of equal importance.

Mr. *Pollen* saw no reason why he should not call for the sense of the House upon his amendment.

Mr. *W. Smith*, in reply to Mr. *Yorke*, observed, that the honourable Gentleman had taken upon him, in a high tone, to assert that the House would desert its duty, if it adopted any other mode than that of a ballot, which was untrue, because both modes were consonant to the practice of our ancestors. Would the honourable Gentleman, after such a parade, answer the question proposed by his honourable friend (Mr. *Martin*), why, in that most important, nice, and delicate case to which he had alluded, the House had presumed so widely to deviate from its duty, as to prefer the other mode?

Mr. *Yorke* said, that he had been replied to by the honourable Gentleman in a very singular tone. He desired to ask, whether it was very parliamentary for one gentleman to reply to another by asserting that what he had said was untrue? With regard to the question, he certainly was sensible that both modes were practised by our ancestors: that by ballot, however, he contended was preferable; and observed, that in the adoption of that mode, the ordinary custom was to appoint a subsequent day for the ballot, after the Committee to be appointed by that mode should be agreed upon.

Mr. *W. Smith*, in explanation, stated, that when he used the word "untrue," he used it in reference to the fact, or he should not only have been guilty of unparliamentary and ungentleman-like language, but he trusted also that he should have been called to order by the Speaker.

Mr. *Grey* explained the reason why he should vote for the amendment. He said, he did not approve of a ballot, but he voted for the amendment in order the more expeditiously to come

come to the question upon the ballot itself. He disclaimed all difficulty in giving his opinion publicly on each individual member if the names were to be called over in the House in order to appoint a Committee. He had never heard of the Opposition list for a Committee until it was mentioned by the Secretary of State; nor did he believe that any such list existed.

Mr. *Brandling* disavowed all knowledge of influence. He trusted that the House did its duty conscientiously.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then desired the entries on the Journals of the 29th of April, 1782, and another in the year 1778, to be read, by which Committees on great public affairs had been chosen by ballot.

They were read by the clerk at the table, together with the names of the members who composed those Committees; and the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* remarked, that the mode of electing those Committees was similar to that proposed, and was not opposed by the Opposition of that period.

Mr. *Sheridan* observed, that there was a wide difference between the Committee then appointed and that which the House was about to choose. The object of the Committee alluded to was, to enquire into the conduct of the preceding Administration; but the object now to be attained was, an enquiry into the conduct of the Administration now actually in power. It was therefore their interest to endeavour to pack a jury, by whom their own misconduct might be tried and judged.

Mr. *Fox* said, it was extremely hard that, if in any one instance he had omitted to oppose the measures of Government, the omission should be ever after called up and imputed to him as a dereliction of his duty. Surely this was an imputation which came with a bad grace from that side of the House. But it was not altogether true that the appointment of the Committee alluded to had passed unobserved and uncensured; for much blame then attached, and many objections were made, to the conduct of a gentleman, then a member of the House, but now a noble Lord (Sydney) of the other House of Parliament. The question was, Whether it ought to be done now under all the circumstances by which we are surrounded?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* explained, and observed, that precedents for the present mode of choosing Committees by ballot were to be found in the conduct of former Administrations, and not objected to by former Oppositions.

Mr. *Martin* said, that the question was not a quarrel between two parties, but what was right to be done.

Mr. *T. Grenville* apologized for the absence of the Chair-

man, and of some of the members who compose the present Secret Committee. He could assure the House, that they had not absented themselves from inattention to their duty, but from necessity and indisposition.

The House then divided,

<i>Ayes (for the Amendment)</i>	—	40
<i>Noes (against it)</i>	—	123
<i>Majority</i>		83

BANK OF ENGLAND.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the Order of Council which required the Bank to stop payment had not produced that alarm which any man predicting such an event would have imagined it would occasion. After all the lofty statements of the right honourable Gentleman upon the flourishing state of the finances, after the documents by which he had attempted to support them, after the provisions for our expences which it was said had been made, after the high-coloured contrast which had been drawn between the state of the enemy's finances and our own, and the arguments which had been employed by the right honourable Gentleman to shew the fatal consequences of a forced circulation, it could not have been credited that the Order would have been attended with so little alarm, and received with so much submission. One great cause of this phenomenon, however, was, that the commercial part of the country derived additional accommodation from the liberality of the Bank in discounts. If, previous to this Order, the country was impoverished by the war to a degree that was not fully known, the prevalence of certain opinions upon this subject tended to conceal the reality of our situation. It was, no doubt, true that individuals, possessed of actual property, might be embarrassed for specie, or, what was now fashionably stiled, a circulating medium. Such might be the case of the Bank of the nation itself. This doctrine, however, had been pushed too far. Like every other principle, it was only true in the degree; and when carried too far, produced the most mischievous consequences. The Minister has laboured to bring the country to think that the difficulties which they felt was a proof of their prosperity. If the Order of Council had not been issued, the aspect of affairs that day would have been more gloomy than that which it now presented. The Minister felt he was in a situation, that if he insisted on the Bank doing its duty of discharging the just claims of their creditors, and of limiting their discounts, from the pressure which they

they felt for cash, numerous and important failures must have taken place throughout the country, and produced a general indisposition to the continuance of the war. On the other hand, he was aware that if he made no effort to enable the Bank to keep its faith with its creditors, but allowed the circumstances on which the Order was founded to come to extremities, he might find a facility in affording a great temporary relief to the difficulties which were experienced. This fact no man could deny. He would ask that respectable class of men, bankers, of which there were many in the House, whether they had not themselves felt a great accommodation from the encreased liberality of the Bank in discounts, and whether it did not enable them to give the same accommodation to others? All men engaged in extensive transactions, whether manufactures, a theatre, or any other concern whatever, felt this to be true. This was the true cause of the little dissatisfaction which had been exhibited, but it was likewise a serious symptom of the danger of our situation. It was an opiate which for a moment removed the sensation, but it encreased the cause. It for a time silenced alarm, and lulled asleep apprehension. The House should be jealous, therefore, not only not to deceive the public, but not to deceive themselves. They ought not to be lulled into a false security, nor accept this temporary accommodation as a bribe to reconcile them to the mischiefs with which it was pregnant. He would not assign any particular time for the duration of this Order, but he was convinced that if it continued almost for one month the situation of this country would be such as to admit of no relief. The breach which credit had sustained, was one which would widen every hour, and which demanded the most speedy and effectual remedy. If the evil had arisen from a scarcity of specie, it was in three ways: by an extraordinary drain, by the balance of exchange, or private hoards. He wished above all things the House to cast their eyes about, and see if they could devise any remedy which might supersede the necessity of continuing the Order of Council by legislative authority. If we were to continue it, necessity would join with habit to reconcile men's minds to it as a permanent system, and things would every hour turn worse, till the possibility of regaining our former stability, of re-establishing credit, was gone for ever. Our situation was either to be retrieved now, or the country was ruined past redemption. He did not consider it much to assume that a forced circulation of paper would infallibly lead to bankruptcy, for how could you stop when you have begun? With regard to notes being made a legal tender,

no satisfaction had been obtained from Ministers; and indeed if the system was once begun, how was it possible to avoid this measure? but in pointing out the ruinous consequences to which such a system would tend, it might be answered that the paper money of this country rests upon a different security from that of the French assignats or mandates, or any other species of money in that country; but to this he would reply, that if they both contained the idea of compulsion, this ingredient alone, amidst many other differences, would produce a depreciation, and though not in the same rapid progress, the paper of this country would ultimately experience the fate of the French.

When depreciation is begun, new issues are made in the same proportion, till absolute ruin ensues. This he was desirous to avoid if possible, and therefore he was against any legislative authority for the Order of Council. The House had not yet understood that the measure was absolutely necessary for the Bank. The Order of Council indeed might bear one thing and mean another. It was stated, however, that the measure was in contemplation of public exigencies, and not because the Bank was unable to meet the demands of its creditors. But taking the Order as it stood, the cause of making the requisition to the Bank was for the public emergencies. In this opinion the Committee in their report seem to have coincided. He had a right to assume, therefore, that it was for the purposes of Government, not from the deficiency of the Bank, that the Order was issued. The House was called upon by legislative authority to declare that they preferred the accommodation of Government to the just claims of the public creditor. In this view he wished to withhold his assent from such a measure, for if it was passed, he was afraid that the efforts to retrieve our affairs, to re-establish the credit of the Bank, would be greatly relaxed. He wished that even if the Order was to continue, that the urgency of the motives to apply a remedy might still be felt. But it may be said, if the measure is illegal, why keep it up illegally, when you may interpose legislative sanction? In the choice of difficulties, however, it was best to take the least, and in his opinion it was better to connive than to sanction. In other cases many orders had been issued by the Privy Council which Parliament had thought proper to overlook. But was the Bank to be exposed to action upon their notes? This certainly was not a pleasant circumstance; but still the House ought to see that the
Bank

Bank was not blameable in having brought on this state of things. That the right to sue and recover from the Bank was clear, could not be denied, but every thing considered, he must be an evil-minded subject who could employ such an expedient; nor did he think there was much danger of its being used. He should be troubling the House to little purpose if he did not suggest some remedy to the evils which he deprecated, and as a substitution to that which he disapproved. What he had to propose he conceived would be attended with effect, nor would it be attended with delay, as the right honourable Gentleman had supposed. The perfect re-establishment of the Bank was the great object which they ought to have in view: without this the country was undone. All the expedients which had been talked of about new circulating mediums were delusive. It was the nature of confidence that when once forfeited, all claims to it were refused.

Government confidence was not founded on reasonings, but on experience. Men took a Bank note because they saw a Bank note paid the preceding day, and knew that it had been paid for a century, not because there might be plausible arguments of security to justify their confidence. They proceeded as the husbandman proceeds, to provide every thing which his agriculture requires, not upon a knowledge of the planetary system, but upon experience. It was experience of its being regularly paid that made men take a Bank note. Unless, therefore, that confidence was restored, unless you could again give currency to the saying "as good as the Bank," no expedient would be crowned with success. The method of effecting this re-establishment was simple: it was by a fair avowal of the situation of the Bank in all its details. They would then know whether the present crisis was produced by errors and faults, and if errors and faults existed, they should be retracted, and guarded against in future. It was of the utmost importance that it should appear that errors and faults had been committed by the Bank in their connection with the Minister. The sentiment of Demosthenes, so often quoted, was one which was particularly applicable to our present circumstances. If we were reduced to our present distress without error or misconduct, the state of the country was desperate, and there was no chance of retrieving our affairs. It was the interest of the Directors that the public should know the true state of things. On the face of matters errors must have been committed. The modes which had been
adopted

adopted to ascertain these points were not good, and he did not expect they would be productive of much advantage. But was it not important to know whether the Bank had ever demanded from government the sums which it had advanced, and whether Ministers had refused the claim? Was it not important to know whether the Directors had remonstrated against any farther exports of specie, and the manner in which their representations were received? If they did act in this manner, then they escape the blame; but if they did not do what their duty required them to do, a cue might be found to discover that the state to which the Bank has been reduced was owing to the misconduct of the Directors. Above all, however, it was necessary to be explicit. The report of the Committee had not stated any thing more than the gross sums of the amount of the debts and funds of the Bank, and however it might be known to some acquainted with their affairs in what their funds consisted, there still prevailed a mystery as to the balance in their favour, whether the greater part of the four millions was in cash or otherwise. The report of the Committee ought likewise to have explained whether the Order of Council was adopted to accommodate the necessities of the Bank, or in contemplation of the exigencies of government. If it was on account of government, then there was no reason at all for enquiring into the state of the Bank. Yet, when the right honourable gentleman must have been much better acquainted with it than the Committee, he had made this the pretence for enquiry. When the right honourable gentleman, however, upon that report stated that he had abandoned the idea of inflicting the guarantee of government upon the Bank, the information was cheered from every part of the House. It was nevertheless very extraordinary that the right honourable gentleman, knowing what he knew, could have stated, as a pretence of enquiry, the intention of this guarantee. After enquiring whether the Directors have done their duty, it would be found, perhaps, that the embarrassments of the Bank had arisen from a departure from the original object of their institution, and from too close a connection with government. It was the more necessary to clear up and fix this point, after the ideas upon this subject advanced by a learned gentleman (the Solicitor General.) Till such doctrines were held out to be unfounded, the credit of the Bank was irretrievable. It was necessary to guard against the effects of persuasion or of force, which might be employed by

by government at any future period. The Bank had departed from their original institution, contrary to that clause in the act of king William, prohibiting them from ever owing more than the amount of what was owing to them by government, a provision which left no risk to those with whom they transacted business. The departure from this principle had been likewise a cause of the difficulties under which they had laboured, and his first proposal was to restore the original principle. Another clause in the 5th of king William provides, that the Bank, under the penalty of forfeiting triple the amount, should not make any advances to government, but on funds granted by Parliament. This tied up their hands from too liberal advances, and continued with great advantage till within three years, when a clause to repeal it was thrust by a side wind into an Exchequer loan bill, by which an indemnity was given for past advances, and the controul removed in future. Since that period the Bank had made advances to government, which it could not have done had this provision existed. His second proposal therefore was, to repeal the clause, and to re-establish the original prohibition. His third was to enable the Bank to avail themselves of the capital due to them by government, and to give them means of recovery. These were the three points which he intended to propose. If the present capital was not sufficient, the sum of eleven millions might be increased, and then, independent of the profits of their transactions, and the assets they possessed, as long as the country existed the creditors of the Bank would have security in their dealings. These were the proposals which he meant to submit, in the view of proposing likewise, that government should repay a part at least, of the advance which the Bank had made, for while the vicious practices he had exposed continued to prevail, no permanent advantage could be expected. It certainly was a natural question to ask, why government had not repaid some of the advances made by the Bank? Why did not the right honourable gentleman call upon the country to contribute their assistance on so important an occasion. After the vaunted spirit, the boasted resource of the nation, would it be impracticable to raise a sum of five or six millions within a few days for the great and important purpose of enabling the Bank of England to fulfil its engagements, and retrieve its credit. If there was no feeling of justice, of honour, of integrity, of patriotism to prompt exertions on such an occasion, it was all over with this country. No pur-

pose of war, no necessity of public service, no demand for pecuniary aid to the Emperor of Germany, could present a more forcible claim, or a more honourable cause of exertion. He did not think so ill of the country as to believe that the appeal could be resisted. If this were done the Bank might continue its discounts fairly, and with its own substance. Now, however, when the House was discussing its solvency, was it right or proper that the Bank should give an increased accommodation in the way of discount far beyond its former liberality? It was true that the debt due by government to the Bank consisted of many articles, but it had been increasing greatly upon the head of Exchequer bills. Instead of embarrassing the Bank by the advances it had made, it would be far better to raise elsewhere the sums which the Bank advanced on the securities it received, and in this manner at least remove part of the pressure which the magnitude of the debt due by government had occasioned. But should he prove unsuccessful in attempting to open a loan for such a purpose: he could answer for it that he would not. The three first propositions he wished to be resolved in a Committee of the whole House, at present he should conclude with moving, That

It appearing to this House, that the effects of the Bank on the 25th of February last, amounted to 17,597,280*l.* and that the outstanding demands on the Bank, amounted to 13,770,390*l.* and it further appearing, that there is owing to the Bank by Government, for advances made for the public service, the sum of 9,964,413*l.* (exclusive of the permanent debt due from Government of 11,686,800*l.*)

Resolved,—That it is highly expedient, as well for the honour of his Majesty's Government, as for the re-establishment of public credit, that the speediest measures should be taken for the payment to the Bank, of the said advances, or a considerable part thereof.

Mr. Grey observed that the sum of 9,964,000*l.* did not appear upon the report of the Committee to be the sum due by government to the Bank.

Mr. Sheridan answered that the two first sums were taken from the report, the sum of 9,964,000*l.* from authentic papers on the table, that sum appearing not to have been noticed by the Committee.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that before he touched upon the proposal for paying off the whole, or part of the sums due by government to the Bank, he should say a few words to the preliminary topics, upon which the honourable gentleman had insisted. The honourable gentleman seemed
to

to think that the House should adopt no legislative measure to sanction the Order of Council, confessedly illegal. He next reprobated the mode of enquiry by secret Committees, which the House has already decidedly approved, with a view to keep from the public what it was not prudent to divulge, and wished that the utmost publicity should be given to all the concerns of the Bank. The next proposal was, to limit the operations of the Bank within the sum of the permanent debt due by government, and likewise to enable the Bank to avail themselves of the capital sum due by government, in case of necessity. The immediate practical measure, however, was to pay off the advances which the Bank had made for government, for the purpose, as the honourable gentleman thought, of setting the Bank free, and enabling them to proceed in their usual manner. The point which it was necessary for the House to consider was, whether this measure, combined with the other regulations, would produce the effect intended? Although the hon. gentleman professed an intention of not opposing, by his vote, the legislative sanction being given to the Order of Council, and therefore there might be ultimately no practical difference, he thought proper to renew the argument on a subject already so much discussed; and it is singular, that after the almost unanimous sense of the House of the necessity of a legislative sanction, that he should now expect to prevail upon the House to change its judgment. The honourable gentleman complained that the Committee had not reported more explicitly the necessity which produced the Order of Council. It certainly, however, was not a little strange in the honourable gentleman to attempt to provoke a disclosure of circumstances which were purposely referred to a Secret Committee that they might not be divulged, and call upon any individual member to communicate circumstances of which he was confidentially informed. The honourable gentleman said that it was impossible to proceed without knowing publicly the situation of the Bank, yet professing himself to be ignorant, and without waiting for information, he assumed, that the proposal which he made was the only remedy for the distresses under which the country laboured, and would have the House upon this authority to adopt his remedy and to reject the other. It was not a little remarkable in the honourable gentleman to contend that it would be better to allow the Order of Council to remain unconfirmed than to sanction it by authority, and to prefer a stretch of power to

the act of the law. He was glad to find that the honourable gentleman was to allow some time for consideration on his proposals. It was certainly necessary to proceed with caution upon a subject of such extreme importance to public credit, to commerce, to revenue, so intimately affecting the means of supporting the expences of the war, and of restoring that deficiency of cash which had been felt, by affecting the rate of foreign exchange. With regard to the proposal for limiting within twelve millions the sum which the Bank should issue, he was glad that this regulation was not meant to have immediate effect. It certainly did not follow that a limitation which had been found beneficial at the commencement of an undertaking, was fit to be adopted in different circumstances; after the Bank had subsisted for a century, after having by its judicious distribution of its capital given rise to so much general prosperity, and produced so much new capital, it was a question, whether any mercantile principles required that caution, which had at the beginning proved salutary. At any rate, since it was considered as such a security to the creditors of the Bank, to have government security to the extent of their capital, were not there other securities on which the Bank might extend their operations equally good, or at least more available?

Mr. *Pitt* here asked across the table, whether Mr. *Sheridan* meant by his proposition, that the Bank should never owe more than the country owed to the Bank of original debt; or, whether he meant that it never should owe more than the country owed to the Bank upon Parliamentary security?

Mr. *Sheridan* answered, that by his proposition he meant that the Bank should never owe more than the whole amount of the debt due from government to the Bank upon Parliamentary security.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then proceeded. He was happy that the honourable gentleman had come to this explanation, which, he was persuaded, was not the original idea which the House supposed, from his mode of stating his proposition, it was intended to convey. What was the best mode of bringing out the specie when there was a scarcity in circulation, was certainly a point of great delicacy to determine. The honourable gentleman's plan was, to limit the circulation of paper in order to call forth the cash; or, in other words, when there was a scarcity of cash, in order to remedy that evil to create a scarcity of paper. For his own
part

part he believed it was quite impossible all at once to call back specie into circulation. It was to be done by gradual steps ; by giving credit time to restore itself by the encouragement of industry, by establishing the revenue upon a permanent footing, and by leaving foreign commerce to act upon the internal state of the country. Having adverted to these circumstances, he begged to say that there certainly were some great limiting principles by which paper currency ought to be regulated : one was ultimate security, without which paper would soon fall into depreciation ; and another was to proportion its circulation to the extent of the medium required for carrying on foreign and domestic commerce and the wholesale and retail trade. If either paper or cash exceed the demands of this medium, the surplus both of paper and cash will be carried to a better market. Paper is a good medium of exchange if it rest upon a proper ultimate security, and if it does not exceed the demands of the medium ; but when a country is surcharged with it, it certainly becomes a great evil. Feeling as he did the necessity and expediency of permitting the Bank at the present moment to extend its paper circulation, he could not consent to the restrictions which the honourable gentleman had proposed ; but the limitations of its advances to government, which was the subject of another proposition to which he alluded in the course of his speech, might, in his opinion, be very properly matter of future discussion and regulation. It was not necessary at the present moment to enter particularly into their nature and extent, as they could not be available for extricating the Bank from its present difficulties. Upon the honourable gentleman's third proposition, for making the debts due from the public to the Bank, demandable at the will of the latter, he should say nothing till he heard of the notice proposed to be given, and of the means of making good the payment in cash if it was demanded. He could not, however, help remarking, that it was somewhat singular that the honourable gentleman, the object of whose speech pretended to be, to restore the Bank to the situation in which it stood by the act of king William, should have started a proposition in direct hostility to the provisions of that act. The honourable gentleman next came to the propositions now before the House, which he (Mr. Pitt) contended was together inadequate to the end for which it was brought forward. The debts of the Bank amounted to thirteen millions, all of which was demandable in cash ; now though government

were

were to pay five millions to the Bank, even supposing that they could pay it, in cash, would this be sufficient to liquidate all possible demands upon that corporation, which was the position held by the honourable Gentleman. He thought it was a pity that that honourable Gentleman, instead of coming forward with propositions which tended to depress the public spirit, and to encrease the embarrassments which unhappily existed, did not think it his duty to encourage the people, and to call forth their patriotism and zeal. The money which he had proposed to borrow for the liquidation of the debts due to the Bank was not to be obtained in a day, and therefore was not applicable to the relief of present distress. Neither, though these debts were paid, would the effect be so instantaneous as to enable the Bank to resume its former operations. He allowed that it might have a gradual beneficial tendency, and admitted the propriety of the measure to a certain extent; but as it would come under consideration much more naturally after the report of the Committee was before the House, he should now conclude with moving the previous question upon the proposition.

Mr. Fox said, I will not enter upon the merits of the proposition now before the House without first making some observations upon an insinuation in the latter part of the honourable Gentleman's speech against my honourable friend. He says he could wish my honourable friend would exert his influence and abilities in calling forth the public spirit, by heartening the nation on the state of their affairs. Have we not had enough of that childish deception? Are we to reason like children, that, because we shut our eyes, others will not see? Have we not had enough of that kind of heartening from the honourable Gentleman; and have we not paid dear enough for all his harangues? Is the country in a state of calamity, or is it not? Will he deny that it is? And have we been reduced to this calamitous situation from the want of frequent and able displays of the national prosperity? Has the honourable Gentleman spared either his time or his talents in displaying its wealth, and its resources for carrying on the war? If our situation is critical and dangerous, it is not to be improved by inspiring the people with a false security. No; we must abandon our delusions, and look our danger boldly in the face. The loss of credit must be a very serious loss to any country, but it is more particularly so to this, because it was its credit which laid the foundation of that superiority which it has held in the scale of nations. When this credit is shaken (and when I say this, it is using a very moderate term), and when
it

it is found to be necessary to introduce a compulsory paper currency, he who knows the country to be in this state of calamity, and talks of heartening it, in my opinion, is answerable for all the future evils which may befall it. Having said thus much upon that insinuation of the right hon. Gentleman, I come now to make a few observations upon the objections which he has urged against the proposition of my honourable friend. He does not seem inclined to dispute the necessity of some restrictions on paper currency, but the limits which he proposes are wide indeed. The whole of my honourable friend's speech was applicable to a regulation which he thought in future ought to be adopted, and not as interpreted by the honourable Gentleman, to a law which my honourable friend thinks ought not to be passed. The honourable Gentleman professes to think, that though the Bank were restricted from making advances to Government, it would not operate as a present relief to the Bank. I am of a different opinion, and firmly believe that it would operate as an immediate relief; for it would encrease the confidence of the people in the Bank, which has been diminished by the idea that it is too compliant with the wishes of Government. But this is not the measure upon which we are now about to vote. The question now before the House rests upon the propriety of paying off a considerable part at least of the debt which is now due from the public to the Bank. One objection which the honourable Gentleman has started against this measure is, that it will stop circulation. I cannot conceive a more desperate principle put into practice than when there is a disproportion between the cash and paper in circulation, to attempt to restore the proportion by encreasing the quantity of circulating paper. I think such a principle must originate in a confusion of ideas respecting the foundation of cash and paper currency, which are widely different. Paper and cash, as circulating mediums, are founded upon principles almost directly opposite; and when there is a deficiency of the one, it is not to be remedied by an encrease, but by a diminution, of the other. Gold and silver are, properly, the true circulating medium, and paper is only valuable as their representative, and as resting upon their security. The honourable Gentleman contends, that it is extremely dangerous at this moment to diminish the quantity of paper. Every thing now is dangerous. But what is the danger which, in this case, is to be apprehended. It is the depreciation of the paper; a danger which is every day encreasing. Shall I be told that paper as yet is not depreciated? From whence then proceeded the extraordinary run upon the Bank?

No

No such circumstance would have happened had paper, in the estimation of the public, been of equal value with cash. What then is proper to be done? Put the case of a private banker. The most wealthy banker in London is at all times liable to have greater demands made upon him than it is in his power to answer; at least I understand this to be the case. Supposing then this to happen, what step would he take? He would stop payment for a time, for the purpose not of lending more, even to those who could give him the best security, but of calling in his debts, and of giving currency to every possession that he has, in order to liquidate the whole of his demands, and to commence *de novo*. Such a conduct, it may be urged, would be attended with great public inconvenience, were it adopted by the Bank. But the question is, In the balance of evils, which is the least? But, says the honourable Gentleman, my honourable friend proposes this measure now before the House, as an immediate and all-powerful remedy. My honourable friend, perhaps, is of opinion that its operations would be more immediate than I may suppose they would be; but I think there cannot be a doubt on any man's mind, that, at least, it would have a beneficial tendency. The honourable Gentleman asks if five millions repaid by Government to the Bank would operate as a charm? If he means by a charm, its preventing any demands from coming upon the Bank, to which they would otherwise be liable, I say it would operate as a charm. But, says he, "it would not enable the Bank to pay all the demands which might be made on it in specie." It is not necessary that it should. Does he think that the evil never can be cured till Government and the Bank pay all their debts in specie? If he does, he must think our situation even worse than I believe it to be. It is sufficient that the remedy shall enable the Bank to answer all the demands that are made upon them, which certainly would be considerably limited, in consequence of an association entered into by the most respectable merchants and traders in the kingdom. Will he shew any more probable remedy? He looks to the trade of the country. We look to it also. But is there any thing in my honourable friend's proposition which will obstruct this operation of trade? The payment of the debt due to the Bank might not, perhaps, be a sufficient remedy of itself; but assisted by the association, and even by the Bill which is to be brought before the House, which, in my opinion, will also be necessary, it would be much more effectual than the single operation of that Bill. The right hon. Gentleman says, it may form part of a future plan, which may be the result of
previous

previous enquiry. But if the measure is calculated to ease the public mind, or to lessen the embarrassments, why not at present give a pledge to the country that it shall be adopted? Time is precious; and strange as his notions are respecting paper currency, he must know, that the longer a compulsory paper currency is continued, the greater is the chance of depreciation. I call it a compulsory currency; for though I do not know whether it is intended to make it compulsory between individuals, it is already made compulsory between two great individuals, the Government and the Bank. The more I consider this subject, the greater difficulty I find in forming any opinion upon the expediency of extending the compulsion to private individuals. I could only suggest whether, in consequence of respectable and extensive associations that have been formed, they might not venture to make an exception of the public creditor, and to pay him in cash? The question then, Sir, upon which the House have now to decide is simply this, Whether the liquidation of the debt due from the Government to the Bank, which is admitted on all hands to be expedient, ought to be executed as a part of the Minister's plan of finance, or in consequence of an independent resolution of the House? I have no hesitation in saying, that I think the latter mode is far preferable, both in a constitutional view and as a mean of restoring public credit. How has the credit been injured? By the inactivity of the House of Commons. How can credit be restored? By the activity of the House of Commons. How has credit been sunk? By the confidence of the House of Commons. How can credit be raised? By the vigilance of the House of Commons. Credit never was the offspring of an absolute Government. In this country it was born under the auspices of liberty, and matured by the fostering influence of a free Constitution. Since the principles of liberty were abandoned, and the blessings of that Constitution renounced, is it surprising that public credit has been lost in arbitrary power? This, Sir, may be called declamation. But I ask how you feel? Do you feel yourselves in health? If you do, for God's sake go on with your regimen. If you do not, let not that be termed declamation which is a true statement of your real situation. In favour of the motion, then, of my honourable friend, there is the universal opinion that the measure it recommends is proper to be adopted, and a conviction consequent upon this opinion, that the sooner it is adopted the better. Against it there is the delay necessary for an enquiry, the points of which we know before it is instituted, and the wish of the Minister that the measure may come

before the public recommended by himself. I leave it to the good sense of the House to decide upon the validity of the arguments on both sides.

I cannot, however, sit down without earnestly entreating every individual member, coolly and deliberately, to consider the question—"Whether the deficiency of cash at present existing, ought to be supplied with paper; or rather, whether it ought not to be corrected by diminishing the quantity of paper in circulation; and whether, instead of looking to an extended commerce for the restoration of our credit, we ought not first to restore our credit that we may be afterwards enabled to extend our commerce?" If there is one maxim which I have been accustomed to believe as more certain than another in the philosophy of politics, it is this, that the resources of a commercial country depend upon its credit, and that to look for commerce after credit is extinct, is to look for an effect without a cause.

Mr. *Sheridan* said that he should occupy the attention of the House but a very few minutes. The right honourable gentleman had conjured up in his mind a proposition which he had attributed to him, and to that proposition he had devoted an answer of half an hour. His answer would have been extremely good if such a proposition had been made, but nothing was further from his mind than the idea that because government repaid the advances of the Bank, the public was to be deprived of the circulation of paper. So much the contrary, that he expressly said, to ease the Bank of the load under which they groaned for the government, would be to enable them to encrease their liberality to trade. Thus it appeared that the whole of the outstanding demands upon them amounted to 13,700,000*l.* Of this sum they had advanced 10,000,000*l.* to government. Relieve them from this, and surely they would be better able to assist the commerce of the country. His motion, however, was not, it seemed, so improper in itself as that he had timed it ill. What! was not the pressure of public calamity the time for public relief? When the Bank was brought to a stand by the impolitic measures of government, surely it was the moment to pay them what we owed. Mr. *Sheridan* said he saw that it was the intention of the right honourable gentleman to have forced paper currency; he had given no answer to the question which he had asked, whether Bank notes were to be made a legal tender? It was in vain to contend against the torrent which had broke in on the country. We were
doomed

doomed to all the horrors of a paper circulation, and that House tamely acquiesced in the desolation of all that was sacred in the kingdom. Already it was believed that between three and four millions of paper more had been issued since the stoppage of payment in money, and to what extent they might carry it, it was seemingly a matter of no importance to enquire.

The House then divided on the previous question.

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	183
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	45
		<i>Majority</i>	138

The motion of Mr. Sheridan was therefore lost.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *March* 13.

BANK OF ENGLAND.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* brought up a Bill to provide for the confirmation and continuance, for a time to be limited, of the measures taken in pursuance of the minute of Council, of the 26th of February last. He said, that it was his intention to move, that the Bill be printed, and that a sufficient leisure might be allowed for Gentlemen to give it a full examination, previously to its being discussed; it was not his wish to press the second reading of the Bill till Thursday next. He moved, that the Bill be printed; which was agreed to.

Leave was given to bring in a Bill to increase the rates allowed to innkeepers for the subsistence of troops.

The Vagrant Bill was read a second time, and committed.

At four o'clock the House proceeded to ballot for a Secret Committee, to examine the finances of the country. The ballot being over at half past five, the following members were chosen.

Thomas Stanley, Esq.	J. Crewe, Esq.
William Baker, Esq.	Francis Greor, Esq.
Right Hon. Thomas Steele.	J. H. Addington, Esq.
R. B. Sheridan, Esq.	R. Burdon, Esq.
Charles Yorke, Esq.	Henry Thornton Esq.
Charles Abbot, Esq.	John Harrison, Esq.
Hon. St. Andrew St. John.	Right Hon. D. Ryder.
R. P. Crew, Esq.	

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* brought up the Bill for enabling the Bank of England to issue notes in payment of the demands upon them, instead of cash; pursuant to the late Order of Council to that effect. The Bill was read a first time, ordered to be printed, and read a second time on Thursday next.

The *Secretary at War* obtained leave to bring in a Bill to encrease the rates that should be given to innkeepers and victuallers for the quartering of soldiers upon them.

On the question, that the Vagrants Bill be committed, a conversation arose between Mr. *Mainwaring* and Mr. *Henriker Major*, when the Bill was ordered to be committed to a Select Committee, and that all who have voices to attend the same.

PUBLIC RETRENCHMENTS.

Mr. *Harrison* said, in consequence of the notice I gave, I rise, Mr. Speaker, to submit to the consideration of the House my reasons for the motion which I shall have the honour of laying before them.

There is a marked similitude in the œconomy of public affairs to that of the private concerns of an individual, that must strike the attention of every one who has made it the object of his consideration. From the same causes the same effects are produced, and the same consequences unavoidably follow. We all are sensible into what situation an individual must be brought who is pursuing a system of expenditure so much beyond the receipt of his income, as only to be supported by creating new burthens upon his estate, till the income itself is absorbed, and swallowed up by the incumbrances he has brought up n it. Yet, melancholy as the reflection must be, alarming as the consequences must appear, such is the situation into which the corrupt and unbounded prodigality of Ministers have brought the finances of this kingdom. And after all those delusions and misrepresentations by which they have endeavoured to keep the evil out of sight, it has at last broke forth with redoubled violence, and has compelled Ministers to take that unfortunate step which might destroy the credit of the nation, in the face of all Europe, and must impress the mind of every well wisher to his country, with the deepest and most melancholy reflections. It is natural to suppose that Ministers would of themselves, under the pressure of such difficulties, have sought to assist the wants of the public by endeavouring to lessen the waste of the public money, by retrenching the expenditure
in

in the emoluments attached to that number of useless and unnecessary sinecure offices and places, with little or no official duty annexed to them, that are to be found in every official department through the kingdom. When they were searching every hole and corner in the poor man's dwelling house to find some object of his comfort as the source of taxation, one should have thought they would not have overlooked their own situation, as offering some source of assistance to the public in its necessity. No, Mr. Speaker, that was the furthest from their thoughts; not that so ample a field could escape their observation, as the effects of it was constantly before their eyes. They rise up in the morning, surrounded with the splendor which it produces, and go to rest satiated with the luxuries which it affords. Yet! Have they in any one instance, endeavoured to assist the public out of the enormous emoluments which many of them have had heaped upon them. If any sinecure office or place becomes vacant, instead of letting it rest as a relief to the public, it is seized with avidity, and as if they were afraid any more virtuous than themselves might arise, we see them even granting reversions, to preclude others from relieving the public from such useless burthens when it might be done without injury to individuals. As the difficulty in the state increases, as the danger presses harder upon them, the prodigality and extravagance in every official department increases likewise. They feel their tottering situation, and endeavour to uphold themselves and to retain their support, by new sources of prodigality and corruption. We see new boards established, new places created, persons long established in offices, removed with grants of pensions and sinecure places to them and their descendants, not because from age or health they have been found unable to discharge the duties of their station, but, on the contrary, in the full power of acting, and in the habitual knowledge of the routine of the department in which they have been employed, and are only made to withdraw with this charge upon the public, that they may make room for others to fill their station. It is such prodigality that has brought this country into the situation in which it now stands, and shall we, as guardians of the public purse, if we have any longer pretensions to be called so, not step forward and use our endeavours to stop such a system of prodigality and corruption. I have no scruple of saying there is a system of influence and corruption prevailing amongst us to a degree, which, if we do not overcome,

overcome, it will bear down and overcome the Constitution of this country. I am convinced it may be legally and quietly corrected by provisions made within these walls. If it is not, it is my opinion, my firm belief, that it will be done turbulently from without. I will put it to the feeling of every well-wisher to his country, which alternative he would chuse. Is there an alarmist, if he is sincere in his apprehension of what he professes to be afraid, who will not go along with me in thinking, that to remove the cause is the surest way of preventing the effect. But Ministers encrease the cause of complaint, and endeavour to counteract the effect by creating strong and unconstitutional power. In times like the present, with the encreased pressure of taxes, and the still further burthens which must unavoidably be laid upon the people at large, does it not become prudent to shew the people an inclination in Government to make every possible saving in the expenditure of that money which is so hardly drawn from them? What will they think of Ministers, at this time, if they use that very power and influence to stop any proceedings that may tend to lessen and diminish the evil of which they so justly complain? Much as any saving to the public, at this time of pressure and difficulty, must and ought to weigh in the minds of every one who has the interest and welfare of his country at heart, yet, I am free to confess, that there is another consideration that weighs strongly in my mind: the influence that is created by the unbounded patronage that it places in the hands of the Minister, and which, it must be obvious to any one, bears down the exercise of free judgment and opinion in our consideration. To that we may attribute the commencement and continuance of this ruinous and unfortunate war; to that we must attribute the accumulation of misfortunes that have been brought upon this country, and which are hanging with encreasing weight over our heads, ready, if not averted, to crush and destroy this once flourishing kingdom.

To the same cause may we attribute that obstinate perseverance in that unfortunate contest with America, but which at last opened the eyes of the people, and made them call for retrenchment in so loud a voice, that the Minister of the day durst not resist, and was compelled to yield to the temper of the times, and establish a commission to investigate the actual state and manner in which the business of the different offices was carried on; and though much waste of the public money was made to appear, and much corruption and prodigality was brought to light, yet little, in comparison of the magnitude and

and extent of the evil, was ever done in consequence of it: and since that time the new-created boards, the management of the East India Company's affairs, and variety of new-created offices and establishments, and increased fees and emoluments, have greatly overbalanced any reduction that has been made in the useless expenditure of the public money, or the undue influence that is created by it. I am afraid I may be thought to trespass too much on the patience of the House, by producing particular instances of the prevalence of that system which so glaringly stands forth in every official station we can cast our eyes upon, yet, with their permission, I will, as shortly as may be, touch upon a few, to bring the general object I have in view to their consideration.

In the arrangement on the revival of the office of Third Secretary of State, the public was saddled with pensions to the amount of 5060*l.* per annum, besides above as much more for the expence of the office itself. In the War Office there is an accumulation of fees to an enormous amount; some of them are returned into other offices, but still the public ought to know the service to which they are applied. There is a fee of one guinea on every hundred pounds on contingent bills and extraordinaries of the army, called the *Guinea Fee*, which, from the immense expenditure at this time, must amount to a very great sum; add to that, the fees paid for all commissions and changes in the army, and for recruiting and beating orders, must, in the whole, amount to an incredible sum. There is another circumstance which will prove the total want of attention on the part of Ministers: in the year 1787 a Committee of Army Accounts was appointed to settle the balance of the army accounts. The balance proved to be 500,000*l.* from the agents to the Government. The agents, however, made it out but 346,000*l.* The accounts were delivered into the office on the 30th of September, 1791, but they were antedated to the 30th of April, the day before the present Secretary at War came into office. I will fairly confess, Sir, that my object is not solely to obtain a retrenchment, but to bring to the notice of the House the total disregard of expenditure in every department. The manner in which very expensive works are carried on, without estimate or contract, as in the barracks now erecting in the liberty of Peterborough, must subject the public to great imposition and encrease of expence beyond what might be absolutely necessary. In the navy department, the due performance of the duty of the respective offices, so essential to the public, that none ought to be discharged but by the persons themselves, but which, upon investigation,

vestigation, will be found by no means the case. This last summer the public was saddled with an increased salary of 1600l. per annum to the eight Commissioners of the Navy, though one of them, the Victualling Board, was at the same time abolished; a continual charge is brought upon the public from the unnecessary expence that is incurred by the erecting large houses for the Port Admiral, the Deputy Governor of Portsmouth, and the repairs of Carrisbrook Castle, in the Isle of Wight, &c. &c. which, as not absolutely necessary, might at least have been spared at this time of general pressure upon the public. Great fees still remain payable at the Exchequer from all accountants that come before them. Multiplied boards for the collection of small revenues are still matter of great charge to the public, and proper objects for consolidation and retrenchment. In the law offices great emoluments arise from a variety of absolute sinecure offices, or where the duty, if any, is discharged by a deputy, with very little compensation for his trouble. The Customs and Post Office will be found replete with useless sinecure offices and appointments, and, in many instances, held by persons in boroughs, for the purpose of creating parliamentary influence, with no connection whatever to the nature of the appointment they fill, &c. We all know, Sir, that the persons in the different establishments of the household are four, five, and six quarters in arrears, while the greatest extravagance and prodigality prevail in all other departments. But enough has been said to convince the House of the necessity that exists for the enquiry that is the object of the motion which I shall submit to them.

“ That the extent of the Supplies voted to Government, since the commencement of the present war, having caused so heavy an increase of taxes, it is the duty of this House to enquire whether some relief to the burthens of the people, or provision for further expence, may not be obtained by the reduction of useless places, sinecure offices, exorbitant fees, and other modes of retrenchment in the expenditure of the public money.”

Lord *William Russell* rose to second the motion. He said, that this was not a time for those who felt the critical and dangerous situation to which the country was reduced to remain silent. It was a period when every man ought to come forward and declare his sentiments. Nothing but unanimity, not such unanimity which had prevailed within the walls of that House, could save the country from that dilemma in which it was now placed by the impolitic measures and prodigal expenditure of the present Administration. Notwithstanding the impracticability of introducing any species of reform,
and

and the opposition which had been made to that question in every shape in which it had been agitated, the storm when ready to burst over their heads, had, perhaps, at length roused that sense of danger which ought to have induced them to avert it by speedier applications. The melancholy events which had lately taken place, the measure of the Bank stopping payment, and the blow which public credit had received, perhaps would produce that effect which had been denied to the eloquence which had painted the dangers with which we were threatened, and force the House to adopt that line of conduct they ought formerly to have pursued, and to renounce the delusions by which they have been misled. He was fortified in these opinions from an observation that the necessity of some reform had been recognised by almost every gentleman who had spoken on the present state of public affairs. He now called upon them to evince the sincerity of their professions. He would not conceal, however, that he was fully convinced that a mere retrenchment was not sufficient. Mere oeconomic regulations would not be sufficient remedies for our present situation. To save the country, it would be necessary to obtain the co-operation of the people; and to obtain their co-operation, it was necessary to obtain their confidence. It was necessary, however, to accomplish this, to evince by some decisive conduct, to prove that they were not actuated by motives of personal aggrandisement, that they were not employed merely in securing power, places, and pensions for themselves. At present he would not go into the origin of the war, the disregard of public interest which Ministers had manifested, the principles which they had held, and the dereliction of those principles which they had exhibited. He could not help remarking, however, the quantity of specie which had been drained from this country to support continental wars, the attacks which Ministers had made on the functions of Parliament, and assuming the power of sending money out of the country without consent of Parliament. He could not help remarking the spirit of hostility to the people which had appeared of late years in the acts of Government, in proclamations, in reports of Committees, where the grossest charges of disloyalty and disaffection are made against the people of this country. It was impossible, with common patience, to consider the expressions which the last speech from the throne contained, in which Ministers had made the most mild and benevolent Sovereign that ever ruled this country ascribe the order and tranquillity which had prevailed, not to the sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the Constitution, but to the force which had been

imposed upon his subjected people. Was this a language to be borne ; was it a language fit to be used in such times as the present ? He trusted, however, that notwithstanding the attempts which had been made to violate their rights, and to subdue their spirit, the people of this country were still animated by the principles of liberty, and by sentiments of attachment to that free constitution they once enjoyed, and that they still were anxious to recover what they had lost. To cherish and to keep alive these sentiments, it was necessary to restore them those rights of which they had been deprived. Upon this subject he should be unwilling to employ the blandishment of eloquence, did he even possess the talent, and he had already seen with how little effect it had been exerted by the ablest orators. He was sorry on such a subject to appeal to any thing but the justice of the representatives of the people, but, in the present crisis he called upon them by every consideration which could influence their minds to endeavour to draw forth and preserve the attachment and confidence of the people by a proper respect for their rights and a real attention to their interests. He concluded with seconding the motion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said—Sir, though the hon. mover, and the noble Lord who seconded the motion, have thought proper to enter into considerations, which so far from exactly applying to the subject before the House, go a very great extent beyond it, it is not my intention to enter minutely into objects so completely unconnected with the present motion, and which we may have many opportunities of discussing. It seems to me unnecessary to trouble the House with any allusions either to the origin, or conduct of the present war ; or to take a review, or enter into a justification of the great and various questions which have been frequently agitated here. The noble Lord has in his speech thought fit to condemn the measures adopted by the last Parliament, for the preservation of the internal tranquillity of the kingdom, and the security of the state. But, Sir, the precautionary measures to which he has adverted were not, as he has been pleased to declare, retrenchments of the constitution, but essential safeguards against lawless attacks levelled at the British constitution by a faction, which, though small, was acting with the common enemy, and was openly proceeding not on British, but on French principles. The safety of the state at that time depended on the wise and just precautions which it was found necessary to take ; and
though

though I feel that any review of these transactions is foreign to the question on which we are called to decide, yet I trust I may be allowed to notice the manner in which the noble Lord has referred to those measures which were calculated to oppose any check to the progress of French principles: He has, Sir, taken great pains to reprobate the proceedings of Parliament on that momentous occasion, and the speech which he has delivered in support of his honourable friend's motion relates so little to the subject of it, that it appears to have been prepared for another purpose, of which notice has been already given. [Mr. Pitt alluded to Mr. Fox's notice of moving for the repeal of the Treason and Sedition bills.] But as these measures have been fully discussed and resolved by Parliament, I cannot, until this House feels convinced of their error, suppose that they have agreed to improper proceedings. While their resolutions on those subjects stand on record, I am authorised in assuming, that they have acted on principles of public order against principles of anarchy and confusion; that they have supported the cause of true liberty against the ravages of licentiousness; that they have protected religion and morality against the desperate attempts of destructive innovation, and that they have preserved our constitution inviolate from the bold and daring attacks of a faction acting in concert with the common enemy of freedom, and of public and private happiness. So far, Sir, I conceive I have an undisputed right to urge on the solemn decision of this House. With respect to the manner in which the honourable gentleman has opened his motion, I am led to observe, that he has not entered into any specific grounds to support it. He has confined himself to very general statements, and he seems to have reserved himself for a particular detail on some other opportunity.

The hon. gentleman appears, from the words of his motion, to have two different objects in view. The first relates to the making retrenchments, and correcting profusion in the established offices of government, and in sinecure places and pensions. The second has for its object an inquiry into the state of the national expenditure, and proposes a check on the expences of the state. This, it is needless for me to urge, is comprehended in a resolution which has already passed this House, to inquire into the finances of the country, and to consider of the most practicable means for obtaining a diminution of the public expenditure. The hon. gentleman means to include in the investigation which he

proposes, subjects of the most extensive and complicated nature. He wishes to embrace all the ordinary and extraordinary expences of the different branches of government. He extends his enquiry into the disbursements of the army, navy, and every public establishment. I am ready to admit, that as far as this proposition goes, it forms a subject worthy of the consideration of the House; and the magnitude of it appears to be such, that no man can say what will be the effect of it, or to what particular measures it may lead. Yet, Sir, the honourable gentleman bringing before the House considerations of such extensive views, and of such high importance, adopts a very singular mode of proceeding. He does not think proper to offer matters so momentous and complicated in their relations in a direct manner to Parliamentary discussion, but states them as the object of a collateral enquiry, and introduces them immediately after his motion for retrenchment in the offices of government. Certainly the honourable gentleman will not deny that there is an extreme difference between both objects: for the check which he proposes on the public expences very much exceeds in importance that reform which he wishes should take place in the establishment and salaries of public offices. The distinction between these two objects being so evident, as the latter does not form any part whatever of the proposition formerly submitted to the House by the honourable gentleman, nor of the notice which he gave of his motion of this night, I must consider the manner of introducing it not only irregular, but inadequate to the magnitude of the enquiry which he proposes to establish. I also think it necessary to remind gentlemen, that the objects which it comprehends forms the grounds of my motion for the appointment of the Committee which has been this night chosen by ballot. I stated in general terms, previous to my bringing forward that motion, the various points to which the attention of the Committee was to be directed, but I could not, until I appointed that Committee, proceed to offer in a specific manner each of these points. I therefore only stated that it was my wish and desire to move, as an instruction to the Committee, that after enquiring into, and ascertaining the whole state of the finances of the country, after reviewing the whole amount of the debt which had been incurred during the war, after investigating the provision which had been made to meet it, after considering the probable amount of the total expence of public service for the whole of the year 1797,
and

and the sums now applicable for defraying it; I say, Sir, after taking these steps, it was also my intention to move that further instruction should be given to the Committee to exercise a full power in forming and digesting a plan for controlling the public expenditure, and to enquire and report upon the best and most practicable means for obtaining a diminution thereof. I therefore, Sir, am not a little surprised, after stating these measures in general terms, measures which I contend have been sanctioned by the unanimous concurrence of the House, in consequence of the appointment of the Committee for the professed and acknowledged consideration of those very objects, that the honourable gentleman should now bring forward a motion to the same end, and without any previous notice whatever. The instruction for the Committee, the nature of which I had thus before stated in general terms, I held in my hand ready to move, when the hon. gentleman brought forward his motion; for I certainly did not think any new proposition on the same subject could be urged, after an express declaration of my desire that the most speedy and effectual measures should be taken which went to retrench the great and heavy expences of war, and were of superior magnitude to any diminution that might be expected in the salaries of the public offices. Without entering at this moment into a particular discussion, whether there exist any specific grounds to authorize the House to proceed to a reduction of useless offices, or to a retrenchment of profuse salaries, I can only say, that it is not my wish to oppose an enquiry to that effect. But I feel I should not do my duty to the House and the public, if I were to agree to any other examination than that which I have proposed, and which has received the concurrence of the House. The honourable gentleman has, however, neglected many important, and indeed necessary considerations in suggesting his motion. He seems, in the first place, to have been unmindful that the limits of the proposed reduction should be expressly declared. He next forgets, that the steps which have been already taken to effect the same end, should be submitted to the consideration of Parliament, as a guide to direct their measures; and above all, that no ill-founded hope may be raised without fully looking into the subject on which your decision is to be formed. If it can appear that retrenchment, both in the number and expence of public offices, is calculated to promote the public service,

service, I am convinced there is no man in this House, that will oppose it. But the question now before us, is what are the specific grounds on which the honourable gentleman brings forward his motion? It is incumbent on him to point out in a decisive manner, abuses which are said to exist in the performance of duties, or in payments for services which are not done for the public. I know, Sir, how very easy it is to give credit out of doors to the reports of abuses in sinecure places and pensions, but I really believe it is a subject as much mistaken as any other of a public nature. I therefore think, in whatever way the enquiry may terminate, that it will be of much utility. If it can be shewn that there are strong grounds for correcting abuses, much may be gained for the public good; but if, on the contrary, it shall appear that there are no specific grounds to warrant a measure of that kind, and that the idea of the prevalence of abuses in the offices of the state is erroneous, much also is gained by removing an opinion, which might otherwise diminish the national confidence. Offices of very different descriptions come within the honourable gentleman's motion: The first which present themselves to notice are absolutely necessary, and in respect to them the enquiry fairly stated is, whether or no the number of offices is more than the different duties of them require; and secondly, whether the reward for the exercise of the various talents and industry necessary for the due execution of them is too great? It might also form a most important consideration, whether the same talents, the same diligence, and perseverance, at present employed in the performance of the duties annexed to these offices, might not be rewarded in an equal or superior manner, were they applied to and exerted in the customary pursuits of life? I have, Sir, no hesitation in saying, that it is an unjust idea to imagine, that the abilities and labour devoted to the service of the public should not be paid as well, and to the full as liberally by the public, as those which are applied in private life to the interest of individuals, and which are rewarded by individual compensation. Next to the offices which I have noticed, and which must be viewed in a necessary light, I come to those which relate to state duties. Many of them are attended with considerable expence for the maintenance of the relative duty they should hold, to the high ranks in life of those near whom they are placed. If we look into the various offices connected with the army, the navy, and the revenue, we shall

shall find, that the wages they receive are not higher than those they might earn by an equal exertion in private life, from individuals; and therefore, Sir, the real state of the question appears to be, whether they are paid in a larger way by the public, than they would be by particular persons, for the performance of equal services? I only state this, that gentlemen may turn it in their minds, and not be induced to take up the matter in a general view. There are unquestionably offices of another description, of less business and with fewer duties attached to them; but I think it necessary to observe, that they arise out of our ancient manners, and are in fact, the remnants of former times, attached to the splendor of Majesty, and attendant on the dignity of monarchy. I am not inclined to say what should be the exact sum for duties of this kind. I only maintain, that such offices have ever existed; and such has been the custom of all countries which have been governed by monarchs. This custom has been interwoven in our constitution, and forms an appendage to our mixed government; not for the display of idle parade; not for the loose gratification of idle vanity, but produced by the manners of our ancestors, and continued for the dignified consistency of appearance in the king of a great and free people. Having noticed this branch of public duties, I shall only observe, that though not included in the first class, they should notwithstanding be considered as connected with your constitution of mixed monarchy. Another description of offices is of a more indivious nature than any I have yet mentioned. I allude to sinecure places, which, notwithstanding the ridicule and severity with which they may be commented on by some gentlemen, are capable of being looked at with the eye of reason. I shall, Sir, shortly state the principles on which they stand. They stand on the invariable custom of this country; they are recognized by the solemn decisions of Parliament. It will not, I trust, be denied, that the fair principle of honourable remuneration has ever been held a sacred consideration. It will not, I hope, be contested, that a provision and retreat for a life devoted to the public service, has ever been deemed a just and irresistible motive for conferring permanent rewards. The question then presents itself, whether at the instant when one common sweep is designed, to remove all offices in which actual duty is not performed, whether remuneration for actions done in the service of the state is a wise, a just, and an useful principle? Another enquiry will naturally

naturally arise, and that is, whether the mode in which they are distributed is more liable to abuse than any other? In the consideration of this question I will not confidently maintain, that the first principle of remuneration may not sometimes be misapplied, as it frequently depends on chance, discretion, and various causes which it is unnecessary for me to enumerate. It may also be objected that it cannot be ascertained by a precise rule how to reward precise merit. But then, Sir, I say can any other method more efficacious, more independent of abuses, and less liable to errors be adopted? Can any other mode be pointed out in which chance and discretion are to be completely laid aside? Suppose, Sir, for a moment, that even an application to Parliament should be made, the constitutional way of bestowing this kind of rewards, can it be imagined that such a proceeding would produce less complaining than the present way in which they are conferred? I beg, therefore, gentlemen will not conclude, because there may be some offices connected with Government which it may be wise to reform, that all are indiscriminately to be wiped away. I should imagine, that a correct and particular statement ought to be made of useless offices, and excessive salaries; that specific objections should be precisely stated, and thus, by pursuing an authentic detail, the House might be enabled to entertain a probability of the saving which could be made for the country. But, Sir, if without adhering to any of these indispensable measures; if without establishing a proper clue, which in the course of enquiry would lead to a just conclusion, you were to precipitate this business, I must contend, that instead of striving to meet the popular opinion, instead of serving the essential interests of the nation, you would, on the contrary, act in opposition to both, and even excite general discontent. In such a case, the House would not do justice to themselves, nor to their constituents. This is not however the first time you have been called on to interfere in similar considerations. The honourable Gentleman brought forward, in the last Parliament, a resolution of the same nature which he has this night proposed; and the event of it is fresh in every person's recollection. In a former Parliament, a plan, which contained a particular detail, which furnished a full statement of the grounds of the application, and which went to a general economical reform, was brought forward by a right honourable Gentleman, who is no longer a member of this House (Mr. Burke). Yet Parliament at that period

period, and in an hour of confessed necessity, with every possible authority before them, with every document which a well digested and a judiciously executed plan could furnish, with the report of the commissioners invested with powers to examine into the various branches comprehended in the proposed reform: I say, Sir, Parliament, with all these authorities before them, which the most exalted talents or the most minute investigation could supply, proceeded in a very cautious and limited manner. They abolished some offices, and reduced the value of others; but they did not allow themselves to extend their reform beyond a prudential and constitutional line of conduct; and what can not be too closely attended to, they effected no change nor modification whatever, without the aid of incontrovertible evidence, and the assistance of positive fact. They wisely lopped off whatever was proved to be superfluous, and they made reductions to the amount of many thousand pounds. To them were added savings by the commissioners of his Majesty's treasury, which were confirmed by the vote of Parliament. But when they came to investigate the offices held under the Exchequer, and proceeded to take into their consideration the nature of the tenure by which sinecure places were held, they did not think fit entirely to lop them off. The tellers of the Exchequer, and several other offices were retained and recognized by the resolution of Parliament as necessary to be continued. Such was the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman who proposed the reform, and such were the sentiments even of some Gentlemen whom I now see over against me. A considerable reduction was then also effected in different offices of the customs, while some were entirely dropped; and, with respect to subordinate employments, large additional savings were made. I have now to observe, that in all these retrenchments the House proceeded on the general and acknowledged principle of remuneration for public services which I have already stated; and of such weight was that principle, that even Mr. Burke himself, though animated with the most enthusiastic zeal to carry his plan into execution, was on every occasion ready to recognize not only the wisdom, but the necessity of adopting it. I maintain, Sir, that sinecure offices are given in the nature of freehold tenure. Parliament has expressly said, they will respect them as freehold property, and if, in answer to this solemn declaration, it is urged that Parliament may rescind their former resolutions, I say they may, by a parity of reasoning, destroy every kind of property in the country. But to dwell

any longer on this kind of argument would be too absurd to merit attention, and I have only to observe, that we ought not to lose sight, even for an instant, of those grand principles which lead to and are inseparable from the administration of public justice. I repeat, Sir, it is my sincere and earnest wish, that the House should ascertain the particular offices which may be paid beyond the duties annexed to them, and beyond the trust and responsibility which attach to them. But until that great and necessary measure takes place you cannot proceed to retrench or to lop off. I must once more entreat the attention of the House, to the nature of the honourable Gentleman's motion, and to the time on which it is proposed. The tendency of it is completely included in the instruction of which I have already given a general statement, and which I have given notice I should move for the direction of the Committee, and it is brought forward at the very moment when a general investigation is set on foot with respect to the whole finance of the country, and with a view to ascertain a plan for controlling the public expenditure.

If, therefore, Sir, it should be the opinion of the House to refer to the Committee the subject of the honourable Gentleman's motion, as part of the general enquiry with which it was intended they should be entrusted, it would be an easy matter, if the words of the instruction were thought too general, to introduce particular terms that might peculiarly specify it. On these grounds I oppose the motion, convinced as I am, that were I to agree to it, the public could derive no benefit from it, and that I myself should become a party in the disappointment, and in the delusion of the people. I therefore move the previous question.

The *Speaker* read the original motion, after which he put the previous question.

Mr. *Sheridan* in substance said. It is not possible to add much by way of argument to the proposition which is now before you, because nothing can, in my apprehension, be more clearly the duty of this House than to enquire whether any relief may not be found to the people of this country by the abolition or retrenchment of sinecure places and pensions. Upon this proposition, however clear as it is, the previous question has been moved and seconded, or in other words, it has been moved that this is an untimely proposition, and that we are not at this moment in a situation in which such a proposition ought to be canvassed.

With due respect to you, Sir, I believe I only speak the general opinion of this House when I say that you worthily
fill

fill that chair, and that it ought to be understood that you are the highest authority in this House; but when I state that you are the superior authority, I ought to correct my expression, at least in the opinion of one individual, for the right honourable Gentleman who has just sat down has told us that he is superior to you. He stands up and boldly avows that he has appointed a Committee; the expression was a very remarkable one, he said, "When I appointed the Committee." It was not a slip, for the very notice that was taken of it at the moment it was uttered called on the right honourable Gentleman to retract or qualify it, or to make some apology for having uttered it; but he did no such thing. I believe he disdained to make any apology. I should not have taken notice of the words if I considered them as a mere slip, but believing them to be no slip, I am bound to take them as the genuine sentiment of the right honourable Gentleman. It is only one more specimen of his arrogance than we have witnessed before, and which he cannot deny. In my humble apprehension, the whole of the question will turn upon this very point, for the right honourable Gentleman does not deny that there ought to be an enquiry into this subject, but his difficulty is that he does not know what my honourable friend means to follow up with the pledge which he has proposed to the House by his motion, but he says he thinks the proper object of the motion will be attained by something which he has himself determined upon; for he says that ever since he appointed the Committee, he had a certain paper, which he intended to move as instructions to that Committee which will answer all the beneficial purposes for which the motion of my honourable friend is introduced. This shews us that he was sincere when he said *he* appointed a Committee, and he spoke correctly, for he certainly did appoint that Committee. That is the very thing that I complain of, and wish to prevent the repetition of. I wish the motion of my honourable friend to be carried, and that it may be followed up by some measure that will prevent the Minister from appointing another Committee; for I do not want to refer any public measure to a Committee appointed by him. I have heard it rumoured that I am one of the Members who are appointed by the Minister upon a Committee, to which he says he will refer the material part of my friend's motion. Without meaning the least personal disrespect to any of the Members of that Committee, I shall go into it with a perfect conviction that we shall make a report that will not in the least satisfy the

minds of the public. I come now to the most material part of the Minister's speech upon the subject which is now before us. The leading features of that speech tend to establish as a principle that corruption in public affairs is adapted to the very nature of our Constitution, and that public business cannot be carried on without corruption. He has reminded us of Mr. Burke's bill, which was brought into this House in 1780, and carried into effect in 1782. That he calls a measure of confessed necessity, but he doubts whether the same necessity exists now, or rather he denies it. No man doubted the necessity then, and who are they who deny it now? Who will compare the situation of this country in the year 1780 with its situation at present, and say, that the necessity of retrenchment is not infinitely greater now than it was then? It is true the necessities of this country were thought to be great in the year 1780, and very great they were, but in the year 1780 the Bank of England had not stopped payment. Will any man in his senses compare the two periods, and then tell me there is not now a greater reason on the face of things at least for examination and retrenchment than there was then? The Minister's proposition goes to this extent, that sinecures and places of great emolument ought to be held in this country; that to abolish them all would be injurious to the public. I believe that something of this kind, but in a limited degree, was admitted at the time when Mr. Burke's Bill passed. But taking this qualified doctrine to be correct, and I do not dispute it, will the Minister, or will any of those who sit around him deny, that since the passing of Mr. Burke's Bill places of great emolument and patronage have been created? that fees which were supposed to be abolished by that Bill have been renewed? Have they not revived that which stood in the very front of that Bill as an object of final extinction, the office of third Secretary of State? I say it has been proved that some of the things which were intended to be lopped off by that bill have been revived. I say the Minister himself holds some things which ought to be lopped off. Does he deny it? What will he say of the seminary which was established for young statemen? Will he tell exactly what his own fees are? and will he maintain that they are absolutely necessary, and that none of them are received by him, but for proper services rendered to the public.

At the time when Mr. Burke's Bill passed, it meant and intended that there should soon follow a regulation with respect to the forests and crown lands; but of them the Minister did

not

not say a single word this night; although at the time I have so often mentioned, the great patronage and influence they created were held forth as things to be abolished. The Minister may say, there are many offices in the Treasury and other public departments that are not over-paid. I verily believe there are; many of them I know to be very laborious ones, some of which I believe to be under-paid; but does that prove that there are none of them over-paid? Indeed, when any man tells me so, I feel the absurdity so much, that I can hardly return a grave answer to such an assertion. I will pledge myself to this House, and to this country, to shew that all the waste and prodigality which attends places, pensions, and abuses of various public offices, is so great, as to be sufficient to maintain with bread all the labouring poor of this country. I do not speak hastily and at random. I have information to proceed upon, for I have been in a situation in which I had an opportunity of examining into these matters. I hold a paper, that was put into my hand, that will tend to illustrate what I now say. It relates to a meritorious officer under the Crown, an honourable Gentleman who sits opposite to me (Mr. Rose). He is a Secretary to the Treasury, with a salary of 3,200*l.* a year; Clerk of Parliament, that is Clerk to the House of Lords, 4,000*l.* Master of the Pleas with another large salary, and several other offices, which make in all upwards of 10,000*l.* a year. I am not denying the merit of that honourable Gentleman; but when we are told that offices are paid on account of great and laborious duties, for God's sake let us understand the thing as it is; let us ask, Whether all these offices, for instance, are performed by that honourable Gentleman? and then let us ask ourselves, Whether there is any thing here that may with safety to the public be lopped off? Suppose we turn our eyes to the situation of the right honourable Gentleman himself (Mr. Pitt); I believe we shall find that he holds some that are not very laborious. Or if we take a view of the situation of a noble Lord, a near connection of his (Lord Grenville), who for a short time filled that chair; he holds a great sinecure office, which was given to him some time ago; and whatever may be his merits, it is certain that he has not earned that sinecure by a very long, or very laborious employment in the public service. There are only a few things which I refer to; but there are instances after instances which might be given of offices held, for which long and laborious services cannot be pleaded. I shall not go through them, because I know the House would not have any pleasure in the recital. I shall only mention those few, to
shew

shew upon what foundation the Minister rests his general assertion of the necessity of these things. The main question for this House to consider, and which they ought to consider attentively, is this, Is there or is there not a general impression abroad that these things are grievous, and that by lopping many of them off the public may have considerable relief? for I agree with the Minister, that, unless that be so, it is idle to have recourse to, and very blameable to hold out to the public, any hope of relief from such a source. The Minister seems to be much afraid of deluding the public with too much hope from such a resource as this. I can tell him that I know the public have great expectations upon this subject, and if he sets about it properly the public will not be deluded, for there is much to be done to relieve them in this way. I do not look to the relief which the public will have in a pecuniary sense by the reduction of useless places merely, but I look also to the effect which that reduction will have: it will destroy that influence which has contributed so much to our undoing. Had this been done before the commencement of the war, we should not have had the hundreds of millions added that have been added to our national debt; we should not have had to mourn over the hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of our fellow-creatures, whose lives have been sacrificed to carry it on. Such we see has been the effect of this war; and the controul over these useless places has been one of the most powerful means by which Ministers have been enabled to carry it on; and that is the point of view in which I consider these things formidable and calamitous to this country. The Minister talks of the expectation of the public, as if he was perfectly at ease upon the matter. Does he reflect upon the impression he has made upon the public mind by the bribery he has employed to gain votes in this House, in advising his Majesty to make so lavish a distribution of the peerage? There are no less than 160 Peers created since the commencement of the present Administration. When we see the people suffering their burdens with such an admirable patience, have we no reason to apprehend that they will reflect on these things? And should we wonder, if, at last, all which has been said upon the necessity of the war by those who have been so favoured, was only said by them to answer the views they had of their own aggrandisement? That they were only pursuing what they had in view all their life-time? This will shew the people that every public man who obtains rewards from the Minister, only thinks of his own interest, without the least attention to the public welfare. I have heard a member of this
House

House say, that some persons were made Peers who were not fitter for that honour than his groom. But unfortunately for me I cannot call upon that gentleman to verify that fact here, for he is now made a Peer himself. I understand there is another batch of Peers about to be created; and, from the names I have seen, no doubt that, while opulence is deemed to be one of the requisites for that distinction, as I think it is, they may be very fit; but when, session after session, this practice is followed to keep up influence, what are the public to think? I am afraid their minds are made up upon the matter. Much reference has been had this night to the labours of Mr. Burke. I have read many of his productions, amongst them a work entitled "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace." Although I detest the principle on which that, as well as many others of that author's works is founded, yet there is a sentiment in it which I think is founded in wisdom. He speaks of the necessity of raising the country to an eternal and vindictive war with France to restore monarchy. Let it be recollected, that, in recommending that to the country, he says, that it can only be done by the force of example. He adds, "As well may we fancy that the sea of itself will swell, and that without winds the billows will insult the adverse shore, as that the gross mass of the people will be moved and elevated, and continue by a steady and permanent direction to bear upon one point, without the influence of superior authority, or superior mind." This observation I wish the House to bear in mind. We cannot reasonably call on the mass of the people to bear their disasters with patience, but from the pure example of men of superior minds and superior authority. If ever there was a moment in which the higher classes ought to shew their disinterested dispositions, and their love of the public good, unmixed with any wishes of their own advantage, it is the moment at which I am speaking. Instead of which, to the shame of Government, and, in my opinion, to the shame of this House, there is a general principle cherished which supports corruption to an unlimited extent. I hope the Minister will reflect on these things, or at least that this House will reflect on them. The Minister has said, that he had in his contemplation to move instructions to the Committee, which will answer all the beneficial purposes that are intended by this motion. It is a little remarkable that we never heard of these instructions before; and my honourable friend has given notice of his intention to bring the subject forward long before there was any mention of this Committee, and long before the House could possibly entertain an idea that such a reference was in contemplation.

The

The right honourable Gentleman may persist in contriving to display delusion on delusion; but if the enquiry be referred to the Committee as he proposes, the object of his endeavours will be completely thrown aside. A Minister may persuade the House to desert its duty, but he will not be able to deceive the people.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that, after the comment which had been made upon a part of his speech, he thought it necessary for him to say a word in explanation. He really did not recollect that he had said *he* appointed a Committee. It was impossible for him to intend to convey such an idea as that he had appointed a Committee. If, therefore, he made use of such an expression, he would put it to the candour of any man in the House, without excepting the honourable Gentleman who accused him of it, whether it could be ascribed to any thing but a lapse, occasioned by the warmth of speech in the hurry of public debate.

Mr. *Rose* said, I am beyond measure astonished, Mr. Speaker, at the assertions which I have heard this night respecting the employments which I have the honour to hold, after the formal and positive denial which I made three years ago to assertions of a similar nature. If the honourable Gentleman was not inclined at that time to take my word for the truth of my declarations, he could at least have made enquiry; and surely he has had sufficient time and opportunity to do so. Of the offices which he has been pleased to enumerate as under my direction, I must assure the House that three I do not hold, two I have not held for a considerable time, and one I never held. The income of one is much less than he has stated, and the income of the other two is monstrously exaggerated. One of them I acquired by a grant from the Crown, in a way which was open to me in consequence of an Address from the House of Lords; and I wish to know whether it be less honourable in me to possess a sinecure place than it was in the right honourable Gentleman, below the honourable Gentleman who made the comment (Mr. Fox), who, during the time he was in Administration, held three sinecure places. In regard to the Secretary's office of the Treasury the hon. Gentleman had greatly exaggerated the income. It is 3,500*l.* a year, and before I came into the office was much higher, being at that time 5000*l.* a year, which emolument my predecessor enjoyed. But when I came in, I told the Lords Commissioners that I conceived it improper to let the profits of such a situation fluctuate in peace and war, and accordingly fixed them below the lowest peace establishment. You will be pleased to observe, Sir, that I do not mention this in any other way than explanation. I do not
complain

complain that I am not fully rewarded for my services, for heaven knows I think I am rewarded well enough, though I certainly receive near 2000*l.* a year less than my predecessor. Now, Sir, in regard to the more general declaration of the honourable Gentleman, that the additions to the public establishments are greater than they were before the reduction of Mr. Burke's Bill, that I deny; and I shall soon be able to come to issue with the honourable Gentleman about it, as it is now likely soon to be tried. As to salaries, they are in general below the value of the services for which they are performed. I do remember a time, however, when the honourable Gentleman who is now so strenuous for enquiry and retrenchment, was averse to such grovelling and petty measures, as he termed them. I shall beg leave to reply to a few observations of the honourable Gentleman who spoke first this evening. There is a collector of fees, as the honourable Gentleman stated, but the fees are applied as the law intended them. The honourable Gentleman stated, that the Commissioners of the Navy had 1000*l.* a year each. I believe they have but 700*l.* Some addition has lately been made to their salaries; and for what purpose? Formerly the provisions for the navy were supplied by agents and contractors, the friends of the Minister in the House of Commons, or by some of their connections, at a great expence; and this mode of giving contracts was similar to the disposal of loans and lottery tickets for the purchase of ministerial support. Now the whole is transacted by the Boards, in consequence of the addition to their salaries; and I leave to the House to judge, whether the expence be greater than when the abuses I before mentioned were practised, to the amount of 80,000*l.* advantage to private individuals. In regard to the sinecures in the Navy Office the honourable Gentleman was misinformed. They all who receive pay do duty. The Transport Office is a new Board, which was absolutely necessary for the benefit and expedition of that branch of service; and the establishment consists of five Commissioners of 1000*l.* a year each, three of whom are officers of the navy, and therefore better suited to the skill and direction of that department; and the others are gentlemen of tried ability and experience, and perfectly fitted for the important trust committed to their charge. Enquiry should precede determination. At present the House is uninformed of the number and expenditure of public offices; and it would be highly improper to ground that upon assertion which should be demonstrated by proof. For my own part, I wish for a thorough investigation into the number and value of all the offices of

public service, and I wish the enquiry to be made with the utmost possible minuteness, because I am sensible it will remove a great deal of misapprehension on this subject. But I hope the House will not be made a party in the delusive opinion, that it is necessary to go into an abolition of the greater branches of public expenditure, nor adopt the partial and unprofitable plan which was formerly suggested, of taxing places and pensions; because I am well aware, neither the abolition nor the tax would produce what is supposed. The House, I trust, will see the object of the hon. gentleman, and see how far it is prudent or politic to promote it. There can be no more solid reason for taxing the income of a public man, than for taxing the income of any other individual, since none of them are paid for more than what the same abilities and attention are actually worth. Gentlemen ought to be cautious too, or it may possibly be difficult to define where such a principle, if once admitted, would end. By the act of Queen Anne, when the war required great and unusual exertions, the tax on incomes was not confined to public offices, but it extended to lawyers and physicians, and the stewards of manors also. In fact, it is just as unfair to tax the salary of any person in a public office, as it would be to tax the peculiar property of any individual; for the pay which I receive for my public services and public labour is as much my legal claim and legal right as any other claim or right whatever. I feel no difficulty in stating this principle, and I have no doubt but it will be admitted, since no man, I believe, has ventured to dispute the right and title of the right honourable gentleman opposite (Mr. Fox) to that reversion which he received as a grant from his noble ancestor, [the grant alluded to was the clerkship of the Pells in Ireland, which descended to Mr. Fox from the late Lord Holland, and was granted to him by the king for public service] and which was the subject of some conversation when a similar question was discussed three years ago.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, in explanation, that he did not mean to say any thing harsh against the honourable gentleman who had just spoken. He was a man of great application and industry; he had stated facts as he understood them to be; but that honourable gentleman had not informed the House of the total amount of his income under government, although he had professed a readiness to do it. He admitted that services ought to be well paid for, but he contended that
large

large sums of money should not be given under the title of rewards for services, when in fact nothing was done for them. Now that gentleman was clerk of that House of Lords, for which he did nothing. The office was indeed a very laborious one, but it was performed by Mr. Cowper. He would now ask the honourable gentleman, whether he had not secured the reversion of that place to his own relation for no service whatever, and the gentleman who performs the office has nothing? With respect to the address of the House of Lords, he understood that that address did not specify that hon. gentleman as a person to fill the office, although he had the good fortune to obtain it.

Mr. *Rose* said it was an address of the Lords for appointing him to that office by name for services rendered; whether these services deserved that reward was another question, and he was by name stated in that address as a person deserving of that office.

The *Secretary at War* condemned the gross error and monstrous principles in which the motion for retrenchment was founded; and rose to reply not only to general observations, but to some which required an explanation concerning the office which he held. He considered the reply of his right honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) to be so satisfactory and conclusive on the general statement, to all who heard him, that it seemed to require a confidence of a different sort to that which his right honourable friend solicited, to embolden any one to contest about it longer. It had been said, that his right honourable friend had now avowed and brought forward his system and opinions of corruption, when that system and those opinions had not only been recognized by general principles, by every well regulated government, and by the ancient forms and customs of this country, but had been recognized by the conduct of Parliament also. On that memorable occasion, in the year 1780 and afterwards in 1782, the principle was recognized by the most solemn and authoritative judgment of what the house thought proper. The illustrious gentleman (Mr. Burke) whose clear and comprehensive mind surveyed, dissected, arranged, examined and new modelled the system of the public expenditure, acted upon a large, liberal, sound, and statesman-like foundation. He did not shift and accommodate himself to that sort of doctrine which might attract the breath of a certain description of persons out of doors, by raising an idle and an empty clamour against sinecure places, but convinced

that retributions should be proportionate to services, and that a youth of distress and labour deserved an age of affluence and ease, he provided accordingly. Such were the opinions, and such was the system of those very persons with whom the honourable gentlemen opposite had once associated, and with whom, without any disparagement to them, it might be their pride and boast to have acted. The honourable gentleman had laboured very hard to represent that the country called for strong exertions, and what was the judgment which he gave upon it? It went to fasten the necessity of abolishing every sinecure place; or, in other words, of destroying public confidence; of depriving the useful and the brave of their remuneration; and of preventing people in future from being so prompt and vigorous as they otherwise might be, on account of the insecurity or improbability of obtaining any recompense. Gentleman ought to recollect where they were when they argued in that manner, and talk like statesmen in Parliament, and not as if they were haranguing a club at a public-house. Let them learn to suit their opinions to their situation, and not to cut off all rewards, and thereby force the people who pursue the common traffic of life to find a market for their zeal in other places. To what dilemma did they wish to bring the country? They would deprive the public of the assistance of all who are in office by robbing them of their pay, and for what? That those who are out of office might leave them in the lurch, or be invited to receive it! Such a jest might serve to set "some barren spectators on a roar," but it was too contemptible for serious argument; for what was the plain issue of it, but that persons, whose long and able services were entitled to remuneration and reward, were to be cut down and impoverished, all men were to rank on the same level, there were to be no means of enrichment, no credit to the country, no chance in the common lottery of life, no change in the course and progress of events, but the same blank, the same uninteresting scene prevail for ever. Did they wish then that none were to serve the public but men of fortune? Grant it. Have men of fortune always the abilities to serve the public, or even if they have, will they also have the inclination? Would the honourable gentleman who brought forward the motion, "I do not ask him at present," said Mr. Windham, "but would he chuse from a strict sense of duty, a love of employment, or a love of power, to quit his native fields, to leave the ease and comforts

forts of retirement, to abjure the luxuries of life, and forsake the smiles of his family, for the trouble, hazard, and fatigue of a public employment, without honour, without profit, and without praise." Would the House adopt a principle which excluded from public employment all men, whatever talents they might possess, unless they happened to be men of fortune? We had instances, indeed, and very splendid ones, of men of fortune going through the fatigues of business, but he apprehended it would be but indifferent policy to rely upon them altogether. Would the honourable gentleman who made this motion take an office without expecting the emolument of it; his own for instance? Would he call for the emoluments of the office, or would he give them up? He did not expect his answer now; but he apprehended it would not be difficult to guess at his answer at a convenient season. Why then carp so much at the emoluments of office. These being the principles and grounds of the opinion of a necessity of a retrenchment in the public offices, as stated to the House by the hon. gentleman and his hon. friend, might the House rely upon their integrity that they would not push them further? Allow that they did not, it would be difficult perhaps to fix the precise boundary, and then it might be necessary also to enquire what changes might ensue, and where the House should desist from pressing this regulation. But a new case occurs which must be shewn. The hon. gentleman stated, that a great deal of patronage had been growing up since the last regulation. For the sake of argument, admit it, and admit too, that the House in conformity were inclined to renew the measure. Well, what then? Is it not necessary first to enquire whether the establishments grow out of the necessity of public service, whether there be not a better execution by the encrease, than could be balanced by the diminution; or whether there might not be pre-existing cases which required such an extension? If any of these cases bear out the propriety of their continuance, what then is the House to do? Why, then, the House is to enquire whether they be rightly arranged or not. If they are all right, useful, and expedient, it must be wise and prudent to preserve them as they are. If they are wrong, useless, or obstructive, then they ought to be abolished, or reformed. To come now to the other topic which is brought into bail, the calamities of the times: Instead of differing from the honourable gentlemen on the other side, he should go beyond them.

H_c

He should go beyond them in deploring the calamities, but he should differ from them as to their causes, their nature, and their remedies. He did not deplore the obstruction of commerce, the decay of manufactures, the loss of resources, and the total annihilation of national wealth; because he was well assured that the country was yet full of wealth, that it possessed the means of riches, that it could speedily revive its credit, and display the same irresistible energy which had distinguished it for ages. But it was the prevalence of that destructive system, the gigantic strides of that unnatural power, whose whole conduct contributed to effect an extent of territory too vast for the huge hand of ambition to controul. It was that extraordinary and astonishing creature, which grew more terrible from contention, that caused all his sorrow. This was the danger our country had to dread, and what resources, what remedy, what fund was to provide against it? A few miserable savings and scrapings, the odds and ends of candles, cheese-parings, and tattered rags and remnants, "a thing made up of shreds and patches," this was to be our resource. If there really was a wasteful and idle expenditure, they should meet it fairly, probe it to the bottom, and come to some manly regulation on the subject, but do not be guilty of a meanness to delude the people. If the pay of public services must share under the operation of a general tax, he wished to know how long any other description of property would be safe. If arbitrary measures were to be adopted in such cases, they might certainly as well go to other possessions. There was a close connexion between such verdicts and the necessity of the times. If, as they contended, it was a war of placemen, why did they not impeach the Minister. But the Minister had the opinions of the House, or he could not have acted else, and the House had the opinions of the country. Let men with large masses of property be cautious therefore how they act in aiding such opinions; for there is a close connexion in reason, and depend on it a still closer one in fact; between the clamour against public offices and the confiscation of private property. The principle had been recognized and acted upon in another country. What service does a man do for his estate? Of the two species of property the place is the most secure, because the "labourer is," supposed to be, "worthy of his hire," and as the estate might originate in abuse of power, or servility to a prince, an allegation might be made, that the possessor and his family had enjoyed the profits of it long enough, and that it was now high time to re-
vert

vert to the other claimants. Mr. Windham supported the necessity of sinecures as a provision for old age, talents, and public services, and asserted, that the fee simple of the whole fund, by the reduction of places, would not be equivalent to a farthing a head upon the people in the metropolis: that such doctrines were only adapted to enflame the poor and purchase "mouth-honour," unworthy popularity.

As to the general argument of corruption in this war, he could only say that if it was carried on by corruption, it was the corruption of the greater part of Europe against a single enemy, and he could not conceive why so large a part of mankind should delight in corrupting themselves to the manifest prejudice of their interests. Those who could lay that flattering unction to their breasts for having opposed that principle were such strange men, that he could not argue with them. He then justified the conduct of all the department over which he presided, maintained that there was nothing there which required retrenchment, and declared he believed that would turn out to be the case in every other branch of public expenditure, all which, however, would appear in the report of the Committee in consequence of the instructions which his right honourable friend had given notice of his intention to move. He concluded in giving his cordial assent to the motion for the previous question.

Mr. *Pollen* said he thought that at the present moment of embarrassment, every possible means of saving ought to be adopted. The point now before the House he conceived to be, not whether a Committee of enquiry ought to be appointed or not, for upon this there seemed to be no difference of opinion, but whether the duty of enquiry ought to be assigned to the Committee which was ballotted for on that day, or to another Committee? As that Committee had been chosen in the fairest possible way, he could see no objections to its being the instrument of enquiry, and therefore he should vote against the original motion, and for the previous question.

Mr. *Bastard* expressed his astonishment at the sentiments contained in the speech of the right honourable the Secretary at War. His arguments seemed to him to be calculated equally for the meridian of a despotism or of a republic, but they were by no means analogous to the spirit of the British constitution. Was all the extravagance in which Ministers chose to indulge to be sanctioned upon the score of rights,
and

and the fruits of that extravagance to be deemed as sacred as the tenure by which legal property was held? The honourable Gentleman argued upon the necessity of corruption under every government. But he contended that it was this which constituted the difference between a mixed and simple form of Government; that a Government such as that of England, could be administered without corruption, whereas neither a republic, nor an absolute monarchy could. His argument went to cover all the shameful prodigality of Ministers in St. Domingo, in Corsica. No, said the honourable Gentleman, it would be unworthy of the House of Commons ever to enquire into it. He trusted, however, that they would not be deluded by such modes of reasoning. It was its expences which had brought the country upon its knees, and it could only be raised to its former situation by retrenchment and œconomy in the management of its affairs. Public credit had sustained a severe shock, and it could only be re-established by a renewal of public confidence, to which nothing could contribute more than the House of Commons shewing their constituents that they were not influenced by any selfish or sinister motives, but that they were actuated only by zeal for the prosperity and welfare of the country.

Mr. Serjeant *Adair* said, he was convinced that the public voice loudly called for enquiry; that the people had a right to expect it; and that they would not be satisfied without it. A good deal had been done in former times in the way of sacrifice, and he could not take upon himself to say, whether a good deal more might not be done in that way. It was certainly, however, a very fit subject for enquiry. At a time like this there was no saving, however little, which, if just and practicable, ought not to be adopted; and, if there was any ground for it, he hoped that enquiry would be followed up by retrenchment. He should vote for an enquiry then upon two grounds, in the first place, to see whether or not some saving may not arise to the public; and secondly, because it would be the only effectual way of removing a delusion (and a most complete delusion he believed it to be) from the mind of the people, that the salaries and fees of office contributed greatly to the extent of the public burthens. He should therefore have acquiesced in the original motion, had it not been expressed in terms which were rather exceptionable; because it took for granted, what could only be properly the result of fair and candid enquiry, and had he not also been of opinion that the object of enquiry would be much better attained in the mode proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to instruct the Committee

tee charged with the investigation of the whole state of public finance, to comprehend this department in the sphere of its enquiries: taking this department by itself might perhaps favour the delusion; whereas the other mode would avoid this suspicion, and at the same time be more effectual. He should, upon these grounds, fully convinced of the necessity of an enquiry, and the propriety of the strictest œconomy, vote for the previous question.

Mr. Fox said, that having been personally alluded to in the course of debate, and challenged to vindicate his consistency in supporting the present motion, with his conduct in 1782, he found himself called upon to make a few observations in his own defence. There were also a few general positions which the right honourable Gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Windham) had laid down, on which he wished to make some remarks. The right honourable Gentleman reprobated in strong terms the expedient of having recourse to the property of private individuals in time of public calamity. He admitted the principle in its full extent, and agreed with him that any encroachment upon the rights of private property, under pretence of public necessity, led to nothing short of a system of universal plunder and depredation. But, in the name of God, how was this general principle applicable to the present case? He had almost imagined that the honourable Gentleman was answering a speech containing some propositions to rob the Duke of Bedford of the property which his ancestors had received from Henry VIII. or to despoil the Duke of Grafton, or the Duke of Richmond, of the possessions which their forefathers had received from Charles the Second. The honourable Gentleman contended that he had as good, or a better, title to his salary as Secretary at War, than he had to the rents of his paternal estates. This, however, Mr. Fox would not admit; for if a motion was made in that House to address his Majesty to remove the honourable Gentleman from his counsels, a motion for which he (Mr. Fox) would certainly vote, it could not be argued that he was guilty of the same injustice as if he addressed his Majesty to deprive him of his landed property. And if the principle did not apply to his removal from office, it could not be applicable to a diminution of the income belonging to that office. There was no connection then between the general principle and the instance to which it was attempted to be applied. The question was, whether in the present calamitous state of the country the emolument of offices of every description ought not to be retrenched as much as possible for the good of the public? Upon this state-

ment of the question there was but little difficulty. But it was said that he could not accede to the present proposition, because in 1782 he was as much pledged not to go farther than the limits of Mr. Burke's Bill, as he was pledged to go that length. He asked the honourable Gentleman whether he recollected the contents of Mr. Burke's Bill? Was there not something in it about Exchequer offices and Crown lands? But it was well known that it never had its full effect, and that the plan, on account of the short duration of what was commonly called the Coalition Administration, was only partially executed. Supposing, however, for a moment, that it had been executed up to the full intention of its authors, was no allowance to be made for a change of times and circumstances? Had not a greater portion of influence been since created than was then destroyed? And if it was urged that new offices were occasioned by the necessities of the times, why were not offices that were less necessary abolished in proportion to the new ones that were created? The honourable Gentleman alledged that, as a pecuniary resource, all the saving which would arise from any retrenchment that could be made would be extremely trifling. The savings arising from Mr. Burke's Bill also was trifling in amount. But the advantage was not to be calculated by merely a sum of 1000*l.* or 100,000*l.* which might be directly saved. It ought to be recollected that it might be the means of saving many millions to the public, and of preserving not only the independence of the House of Commons, but the independence of the country. The honourable Gentleman did not dispute the calamitous state of the country, but he looked at only one side of the calamity; he only looked at the extension of the French territory, forgetting altogether the situation of its internal credit. He forgot that it was the means of influence which were in the hands of Ministers that had contributed to the enormous territorial aggrandisement of France; that had it not been for this influence the republic of France would not have had Brabant, and would not have had Italy, and that the honourable Gentleman would not now have had reason to lament the extent of her dominions. That ministerial influence obtained in the House of Commons, Mr. Fox appealed to the authority of Mr. Burke, in that passage of his *Regicide Peace* where he intimates a suspicion that the minority of the House of Commons express the sense of the majority. And to what was this to be ascribed? Was it not to the places, pensions, commissions, and all the various kinds of patronage, of which Ministers were in possession? The honourable Gentleman asked, whether he (Mr. Fox) supposed that there were

no other principles of public conduct but those that were founded upon corruption? He admitted that there were Gentlemen who acted upon different principles, but he contended that this was a very general and very powerful spring of action. This was a topic nearly connected with Exchequer offices, which, in his opinion, at the death of the present incumbents, ought to be entirely abolished. If he was asked, how he had come to change his opinion upon this subject since 1782? he answered, that it was one of those topics on which one might alter their sentiments without deserting any general principle. Indeed there were arrangements which ought to be regulated so much by the circumstances of the times, that he should have no objection that an enquiry of the nature now proposed should take place every ten or twelve years. When he heard of the splendour necessary to a court, and of the dignity which it was proper to support in high situations, he was ready to acknowledge, that in certain circumstances, that splendour and that dignity might be proper and becoming; but in times such as these, when public credit was fallen, when commerce was fast decaying, and when the nation were groaning under a load of taxes which they were scarcely able to support, then they became insults upon the people; and in order to maintain authority, instead of affecting gaiety and ease, the rulers of a nation ought to manifest the same symptoms of mortification and distress which pervaded the community. The honourable Gentleman contended, that the idea of retrenchment was a vulgar error, and that pensions were bestowed as the reward of merit. If it was a vulgar error, the vulgar error ought to be undeceived; and with respect to pensions being given as the reward of merit, he would appeal for the refutation of the doctrine to the history of modern times. where he would find that pensions had been bestowed upon men merely on account of their subserviency to a faction, of which he (Mr. Windham) once held the same opinion that he (Mr. Fox) still entertained of them. He afterwards adverted to the sinecures of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, with which they had provided themselves when they were loading the people with an accumulated weight of burthens; and also to the arrangement in the Secretary of State's office, by which Mr. Aust was removed from the situation he there held, though he was eminently qualified for holding it, and at a time of life when he was as fit for business as ever he had been, merely to provide for Mr. Canning, who could not do the business of the office till he was instructed in it by Mr. Aust. Mr. Fox then proceeded to a topic a little more difficult and nice. The honour-

able Gentleman appealed to him, Whether he believed that his conduct was influenced by corrupt motives? He certainly believed that his conduct, as well as theirs with whom he had been accustomed to act, was influenced by motives very different from those of ambition or venality, but he confessed it had been such as strongly to induce suspicion, and that the world would not perhaps give them so much credit for honesty as he did. He referred to a sentiment in one of Mr. Burke's publications, in which he states, that when men swerve from those principles upon which they used to act, and leave those parties to which they were formerly attached, that they often deceive themselves respecting their motives,* and that when they fall into a state of the lowest insignificance, they sometimes flatter themselves that they never stood on so high ground. Were he now to state his opinion of his noble friend (Lord W. Russell) who had been referred to in the course of the debate, of his clear consistency of character, of his high and nice sense of honour, and above all, of his steadiness of character, and even where he to be asked, Whether he had not at one time as high an opinion of others from whom he now differed? He would answer, certainly he had. Nor would he be more surprised at any change in the sentiments of his noble friend than he had been at the difference of sentiments between the author of the work, entitled *The Causes of the present Discontents*, and of those who signed the resolutions of 1784, and the opinion which they at present profess to hold. A distrust of public men was one among others of the lamentable effects of the present war.

The honourable Gentleman said the labourer was worthy of his hire, and that the servants of the public were not overpaid. He had no objections to the servants of the public being handsomely rewarded; nay, he for one would go so far as to say that wherever a man had a legal right to a place, however that right was acquired, he should not be for disturbing him in the possession of it. But if the labourer was to be paid, why did not Mr. Cowper, who did the duty, receive the salary of clerk to the House of Lords? Why did an honourable Gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Rose) receive the salary, and as if that were not enough, secured the reversion to his son? It was most scandalous and enormous? When he said this, however, if he had got a legal grant of it he would not wish to deprive him of it. All he wanted was, that the reversions should be saved to the public. Mr. Fox did

did not approve of the mode of assigning the enquiry to a Committee already ballotted for. But even supposing that it was to be referred to this Committee, was that any reason why the House should not agree to the proposition of his honourable friend? They would then be pledged to the country to make retrenchments wherever they could consistently with the public interest and the public honour. But, in plain language, the honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) wished that it should rather be done by him than by the House of Commons, in the same way that he insisted that when advances were to be made to the Bank, it should be done at his own instance, and not upon a resolution of that House. Good God! Had not they even yet had enough of his measures? if they were not yet tired of them, they would make trial of a few more. The honourable Gentleman begged that the House would not take this mode of punishing him. Certainly not. He hoped that he deserved punishment; if he did not, the country must be in a dreadful situation; but, if he was to be punished, it ought certainly to be in another way than by a diminution of income. But he (Mr. Pitt) was afraid that the proposition of his honourable friend (Mr. Harrison) would delude the public. He would put it to the House, whether the public were more likely to be deluded by an open discussion of the subject or by a Committee which he truly said was appointed by him, by him who had spent his whole life in delusion. To delude them into expence of seven or eight millions was nothing, but to lead them to hope for a little greater saving than it might be possible to make, that would be an incurable evil! He warned the House against the influence of such argument, and against leaving the enquiry to the Committee which had been ballotted for, though he did not know the members who composed the Committee, he knew that if it was formed by the Minister, it was formed for the purpose of delusion, &c.

Mr. *Rose* in consequence of the word "*scandalous*," which Mr. Fox had applied to him in respect to the reversion of clerk to the House of Lords, said that he deemed it no more scandalous in him to obtain that reversion for his son, than it was in the father of that right honourable Gentleman to obtain the reversion of two patent places for him. Nor did he believe, there would be any thing more so in the mode by which that reversion might be disposed of, than there was in the way those other reversions had been disposed of, by the right honourable Gentleman.

Mr.

Mr. Fox said, he did not know what the Gentleman meant by his allusion to his disposal of the reversions he had mentioned. The truth, he supposed, was, that the right honourable Gentleman meant to insinuate, that he very imprudently dissipated them. This was not the first time, by many, that he had been reproached with the dissipation of his fortune. It was not, however, that those Gentlemen opposite to him who did so, felt the least displeasure at his having dissipated his fortune—they were only angry, that he had not been so mean as to resort to those measures to repair it, to which they themselves were so partial, (*loud and reiterated cries of hear! hear! hear!*)

Mr. Rose explained that he meant nothing personal.

The Speaker interfered. He said, he was sorry to observe so much warmth had taken place. He wished to set the matter right. He was convinced the hon. gentlemen had mutually mistaken each other. He was clear from the first, that Mr. Fox had never applied the word “scandalous” to any share Mr. Rose had in the transaction of the reversion; and equally so, that Mr. Rose never intended any thing personal to Mr. Fox in the use of the same word; otherwise he should instantly have interposed, and given his hearty censure of such language and proceeding.

Mr. Canning conceiving that some reflections had been thrown on the way in which he came into the place, justified his own conduct. The public had not, he said, been encumbered with an additional expence on his account. Mr. Aust, whom Mr. Canning succeeded, had been appointed to other offices more lucrative, but *his* appointment had added no new expence to the public burthens. “If sordid views had been my object,” said Mr. Canning, “I would rather have accepted those offices which Mr. Aust now holds than the station I fill.”

Mr. Fox said, he would not throw any imputation on the motives which induced Mr. Canning to accept his office; but the removal of Mr. Aust seemed to be a sort of job to make room for Mr. Canning. He claimed the protection of the Speaker, and asked whether he might not arraign the conduct of Ministers, in disposing of places and pensions without being answered by every gentleman who enjoyed a place or a pension, as if he meant a personal attack on them all. But whatever might be said on this subject he certainly would discharge his public duty.

Mr. Rose again explained.

Mr,

Mr. *Canning* said, that if Mr. *Fox* objected to his capacity to discharge the duties of his office, he had nothing to say in reply; but in no other respect could it be said that the public had lost by his appointment to an official situation.

Mr. *Fox* still contended that a sinecure had been given to a very deserving gentleman indeed (Mr. *Aust*) to make room for Mr. *Canning*, and that therefore, in this way, it might be said Mr. *Canning* had been appointed to a sinecure.

Dr. *Lawrence* cordially agreed in many of the general principles that had been laid down, respecting economical reform. They were the principles he had long cherished; but he could not agree in all the principles of reform that had been advanced that night. The name of a right hon. friend of his (Mr. *Burke*) had been introduced, and the pension he received had been made the subject of some animadversion; but he avowed that Mr. *Burke*'s pension was the pride and the honour of his life. It had been the custom of late to introduce the name and the writings of Mr. *Burke* into most public discussions, both in that House and other places, gentlemen seemed to think they stood on strong ground when Mr. *Burke* and his writings were introduced; but he could justify every sentence that Mr. *Burke* had written. Here Dr. *Lawrence* commented on the writing of Mr. *Burke*, that applied to the present question.—He disapproved of Mr. *Harrison*'s motion, on the same grounds that Mr. *Burke* had, in 1782, disapproved of motions respecting reform. The present motion did not clearly point out the abuses complained of: It left it doubtful, whether it did not point at some defect in the constitution. While it professed to mean one thing, it was calculated to impress an opinion of another. While it professed to aim at public economy, it might give rise to the idea of defects in our constitution. It was to stop this delusion, in 1782, that Mr. *Burke* brought forward his bill of economical reform. It was to dispel the notions then afloat respecting theories and improvements in government, and to lead the people from dangerous innovations to wholesome reforms that Mr. *Burke* brought forward that bill. He made a specific motion, and fully explained the whole of his plan. The public could not be deluded by Mr. *Burke*'s proceedings, and Dr. *Lawrence* wished the present motion was equally explicit and defined. He then entered into a justification of the war, and denied that the influence of the crown enabled Ministers to involve the country in it.

Mr,

Mr. Fox said, he was sorry to be supposed capable of misquoting the writings of that respectable gentleman (Mr. Burke.) He said he would consider it as a reproach to him not to be well read in Mr. Burke's writings; and he believed himself incapable of misquoting him, either through negligence or design. He argued from Mr. Burke's works, not so much that he had deserted his former friends, as that he (Mr. Burke) had associated with, and supported an administration constituted, *constituted*, he repeated, on principles directly opposite to those maintained in most of Mr. Burke's books.

Mr. Harrison said a few words in reply.

Mr. Tierney said, he did not rise to speak to the propriety or impropriety of a reform in the public expenditure, as that was a point on the necessity of which all sides seemed to be agreed; he rose merely to state some difficulty respecting the question in the way it then stood. The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved for a Committee to consider of dry matters of finance, and he had moved the previous question on the present motion, for the express purpose of referring it to that Committee. But the object for which the Committee was instituted, and the object of the present motion were very different. One Committee of gentlemen might be very well qualified to enquire into dry matters of finance, and yet they might be very unfit persons to decide on what savings could be made in abolishing useless places and pensions. This difficulty appeared the greater to Mr. Tierney, as he understood from rumour (a wicked and false report perhaps) that two gentlemen were on the Committee, who enjoyed a divided office, (Messrs. Steel and Ryder, Joint Pay-masters,) and surely they were not the best men to make savings by abolishing useless offices. If he voted for such men to be members of such a Committee, he would expect to be told he was laughing at his constituents. He congratulated Mr. Pitt on the plausible course he had taken, by referring the motion to that Committee, and made no doubt the right hon. gentleman would soon again take his old friend Parliamentary reform by the hand; but he suggested the propriety of adjourning the debate till the scrutineers, appointed to examine the ballot, should report who were elected members of the Committee, this he wished to be done; but if it did not meet the sense of the House, he should vote against the previous question.

The

The House divided on the previous question.

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	—	169
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	—	77
				Majority.
				92

Mr. *Sheridan* proposed that Mr. *Fox* should be added to the Committee, ballotted to enquire into the state of the finances of the country.—The House divided,

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	75
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	148
			Majority
			73

Adjourned at twelve o'clock.

LIST OF MEMBERS WHO JOINED OPPOSITION,
ON THE QUESTION PROPOSED TO THE HOUSE BY MR. HARRISON.

Baker, Wm.	Lubbock, John
Bastard, E. P.	M'Pherson, Sir J.
Bond, John	Shuckborough, Sir George
Bouverie, Ed. (for Downton)	Sinclair, Sir John
Edwards Bryant	Webster Sir Godfrey
Hawkins Sir Christopher	Wilson Richard
Knight Richard Payne	Wood Colonel.
Langton William Gore	

On the Division for adding Mr. Fox to the Committee :

Adair Serjeant	Morpeth Lord
Baker William	Pollen G. A.
Baldwin W.	Robson Bateman
Bond John	Sinclair Sir John
Bridgman Orlando	Webster Sir Godfrey
Hawkins Sir Christopher	Wilson Richard
Knight Richard Payne	Wynne Sir W. W.
M'Pherson Sir John	

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, *March 14.*

In consequence of the continuance of the Lord Chancellor's indisposition, Lord Kenyon acted again this day as Speaker.

The further proceedings respecting Lord Lauderdale's Petition were deferred till this day se'nnight.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was sworn respecting his
VOL. II. 1797. Z z proposed

proposed evidence before the Secret Committee of their Lordships.

The Trent and Mersey Canal Bill was reported, on which The Earl of *Moir* said, it was not expected that the report would have been made in so thin a House; he would therefore take the opportunity of the third reading of the Bill to deliver his sentiments upon the measure. Deeming it of very great importance, he would recommend the printing of the evidence taken before the Committee, for the perusal of their Lordships in the interval. His Lordship moved, "That the Evidence be printed," which was ordered accordingly.

LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

The Earl of *Moir* acquainted the House, that, in consequence of the indisposition of a noble and learned Lord (the Chancellor), he was induced to postpone his intended motion of to-morrow, respecting the Law of Debtor and Creditor. He regretted the circumstance of his being obliged to postpone what he had to offer on this subject, on account of the absence of other learned Lords, until so late a period in the session: however, in the present instance, he had not much hesitation in postponing it, as he deemed it incumbent on him in fairness to wait awhile for the noble Lord's restoration, as that learned personage had, on former occasions, given a decided opinion against his proposition. On this ground only he postponed it in the present instance. He would therefore, under the same impression, fix at present no particular day for taking the subject into consideration, but content himself with moving, "That the order for summoning their Lordships for the next day be discharged," which was ordered accordingly.

Mr. *Hobart* presented from the House of Commons the Land Tax Commissioners' Name Bill, which was read a first time.

Two private Bills were also brought up.

STATE OF IRELAND.

The Earl of *Moir* expressed his satisfaction at seeing the noble Secretary for the Home Department (the Duke of Portland), as the subject to which he wished to call the attention of their Lordships was more particularly connected with that department of the Administration. He meant the situation of affairs in Ireland. These he considered to be in the most critical and alarming state; and it were worse than folly, he said, to defer any longer taking steps to guard against the impending

ing evils. Post after post brought the most alarming intelligence from that country; several parishes in the North were not long since declared to be in a state of disturbance, and recently one whole county (Downe) was declared to be in a similar state. That county his Lordship described to be the richest and most populous of any in Ireland; and, for its size, its population was greater than any part of Europe he had ever been in. The great importance of Ireland as a member of the empire, and its close connection with the safety and prosperity of Great Britain, were too well known and felt to need insisting on; and on this ground, the propriety and necessity of this country taking a part in its concerns, when the urgency of the occasion required, was obvious. He was aware that it might be objected against him that Ireland was an independent country, ruled by a separate legislature of its own, and that any interference respecting its internal concerns, on the part of the legislature of this country, would be highly impolitic and improper. On great and important occasions he thought directly the reverse; and he believed that it would be found, on enquiry, that the evils which agitate that unhappy country resulted solely from the system enforced there by the Administration of this country. Never did there exist a subject of more important national concern, or which more imperiously called for the interference of Parliament.

The effect of what he meant to propose, his Lordship stated, would be, to move their Lordships to entreat the paternal intervention of his Majesty, to order steps to be taken to allay the jealousies, and redress the grievances, which exist in his kingdom of Ireland. And, on this occasion, he had also to regret the indisposition of the noble Lord to whom he had before alluded: his experience and abilities were to be wished for, to assist in such an important discussion. But the occasion was too momentous, and the necessity of immediate enquiry too great, to be delayed on account of any individual. He therefore deemed it incumbent on him to name an early day; not, however, intending absolutely to bring on the discussion on such a day, did that noble Lord remain so long ill, if it should then appear that his recovery was likely to take place in a short time after. With this view his Lordship named Tuesday next, and moved that the House be summoned for that day.

Lord Grenville said, it was obviously unnecessary to enter into the discussion at present, however the noble Earl might appear inclined to do so, though at the moment of giving notice. He rose then only for the purpose of making two obser-

vations; first, to point out, in case the noble Earl was determined to persevere, the propriety of having his noble and learned friend (the Chancellor) present at the discussion; not solely with a reference to the assistance which was to be expected from his wisdom and experience in the debate, but with a view to the necessary dignity of the House, and the regularity of its proceedings. His second observation was, to insist, which he deemed it incumbent on him to do, even in that stage of the business, on the very great impropriety, and gross impolicy, of their Lordships coming to such a decision as that suggested by the noble Earl; and so deeply was he impressed with this conviction, that he deemed it necessary, in those general terms, to state, then, his decided disapprobation of it.

Earl *Moir*, in explanation, insisted on the propriety and necessity of the interference of the British Parliament, on such an occasion, in order to evince to the people of Ireland, that it was neither the sense of the Parliament, nor of the bulk of the people of Great Britain, that the grievances of that country should remain unredressed.

Lord *Grenville*, in reply, contended for the impropriety of the interference of the British Parliament on the occasion; and, generally, vindicated the conduct of Ministers with respect to Ireland. With regard to bringing on the discussion during the absence of his noble and learned friend, from indisposition, he was so fully aware of the impropriety of it, that he avowed his determination, should the noble Earl press his motion on the day mentioned, to take the sense of their Lordships on the propriety of postponing the discussion.

The several Bills on the table, chiefly private, were forwarded in their respective stages.

Earl *Spencer* presented some Admiralty papers, in consequence, he said, of the request of a noble Duke, illustrating farther the expected debate of Thursday next.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *March 14.*

Colonel *Wood* put off his motion upon the internal defence of the country till the following Tuesday.

Mr. *Ellis* put off his motion on the Slave Trade, which stood for Thursday, till Monday.

Mr. *McDowal* moved for leave to bring in a Bill to empower the banks in Scotland to issue notes under the value of 20s.—Leave was given, and the Bill was brought in and read a first time.

A new

A new writ was ordered for Yarmouth, in the room of Edward Rushworth, Esq. who has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds in the county of Buckingham.

Mr. *Grey* moved, that the ballot for the Committee upon the Inverkeithing election should be put off from Thursday to a future day, on account of the absence of Mr. Adam, upon the circuit, who was leading counsel for the petitioner.

Mr. *W. Dundas* opposed the motion, upon the ground of between twenty and thirty witnesses having arrived in town that day to give evidence upon the election, which, if it was put off, would be attended with a ruinous expence to the sitting member.

Mr. *Grey* did not persist in his motion.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *March 15.*

The Bills brought up yesterday were read a second time, and their Lordships received two more from the Commons.

Lord *Maira's* motion which stood for this day, was postponed until the Lord Chancellor should be so far recovered, as to sit on the woolfack.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *March 15.*

The Bill for altering, explaining, and amending the Bill for raising a certain number of men for the army and navy passed the Committee of the whole House, and the report was ordered to be received the next day; as did also the Bill for allowing the royal Bank and banking company in Scotland to issue notes for any sum under twenty shillings.

The Newcastle Canal Bill, after a short debate, was read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee.

Mr. *Tierney* moved, That there be laid before the House an account of Exchequer Bills, dated the 11th of March, 1797, and issued the 11th and 13th of the same month, together with an account of the rate of discount thereon, and for what sums.—Ordered.

The other Orders of the day were deferred.

Adjourned.

HOUSE

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, *March 16.*

The Order of the day for the Lords being summoned, being read.

The Earl of *Albermarle* rose in consequence of the notice which he had given to move for an enquiry into the measures which had been taken for the naval protection of Ireland, when an invasion of that kingdom was lately attempted by the French. The importance of the question, as involving the pride and superiority of the English navy, and the safety of a great branch of the British empire was such, that he almost shrunk from the discussion. The subject itself, however, was of such magnitude, that it did not require any arguments of his, in addition, to attract the attention of their Lordships. He begged, at setting out, not to be understood in any thing that he was about to say, as meaning to impute blame either to the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty, or to any of those gallant officers whose names he might have occasion to mention. But when the public mind was so much agitated as it had been upon this question, and when the public opinion was divided not so much upon the question, Whether blame was imputable somewhere, as upon the quarter where the censure ought to attach? He presumed that he should be justified in the eyes of their Lordships, as well as in those of the public, in proposing to institute an enquiry, Whether or not any misconduct had taken place, and if it had, who had been guilty of the mismanagement? If precedents were expected to be produced by him in justification, he could answer, that were precedents wanted to sanction such a proposition, there were abundance to be found in the history of the country. Of late years, indeed, unfortunately for the public, enquiries had not been instituted into the conduct of the servants of the Crown, if they had, the country might not have been in the calamitous situation in which it was now placed. But the system of blind implicit confidence was of recent origin, and he trusted that Parliament was sufficiently convinced of its fatal tendency to persist in pursuing it. To come then directly to the subject of his motion, it was known for a considerable time before the attempt was made that the French were fitting out a hostile expedition against some part of his Majesty's dominions, and considering the immense sums that were readily granted for secret service money, Ministers must, or
at

at least ought, to have been apprized of it. The fact however was notorious, that the expedition was prepared, and that an attempt was made with impunity to invade Ireland, and that the seventeen ships of the line, together with a number of troops under the command of general Hoche, after insulting our coasts, was permitted to return in safety to Brest without being annoyed by any of our fleets. Upon the face of the business then there certainly were grounds for enquiry, and if the details, of which their Lordships were in possession, were impartially examined, he was persuaded that these grounds would be strengthened and confirmed. When the papers were produced, he flattered himself that the explanation they would give to the public would be full and satisfactory, and that there was an end of his motion. He confessed, however, after having critically examined them, that his doubts were encreased, and his suspicions, so far from being removed, had taken firmer hold of his mind. The noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty said on a former evening, that were the measures again to be taken, he would not vary from the line of conduct which had been adopted. He was convinced, however, that from the facts which he was about to state, that he would satisfy the House, and even that noble Lord, that if those measures were not founded in error, that at least it required something more than his simple assertion to satisfy the House that his opinion was right. In the first place it was stated that Ministers did not know whether the expedition was intended to be directed against Ireland or against Portugal. It was evident they did know this, from the language they held forth to the public, in the commencement of the present session. The truth of that language was also confirmed by the memorable measures which they adopted towards putting this country into a state of defence. How came it, then, his Lordship asked, that with a perfect knowledge of such an intention in the enemy so early as September last; when from that time to late in December, an armament of considerable force was openly preparing at Brest, no fleet of our's should be stationed on the coast of Ireland for its protection? This question was a very important one, and he thought it well became their Lordships to weigh well and consider attentively the answer that should be given to it. It appeared to him, his Lordship said, to be
of

of still greater importance, from what had fallen from the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty, on the night that he had first given notice of his present motion. The noble Earl had then, with a considerable degree of warmth, declared, that "he believed if the thing was to be done over again, the Admiralty would act exactly in the same manner." In order to form a just and fair opinion whether the Admiralty were then right in what they did, or would be prudent in repeating it under a similar situation, it would be necessary to enter upon a review of the whole circumstances. In doing this it would be proper to go at some length into detail on the proceedings of the enemy and of our own fleets. In this, however, he would endeavour to be as concise as the nature and importance of the subject would admit. In the month of September, his Lordship said, it was pretty generally and publicly known that an armament of very considerable extent, both as to ships and men, was going forward at Brest. From the situation of that port, it was the general opinion that it could only be intended for one of these two objects: to act either against Portugal, or against Ireland. The latter, however, was that against which most people imagined it to be intended. Early in October a fleet was sent out under the command of Admiral Colpoys, which was to remain stationed off Brest harbour, for the purpose of watching the motions of the enemy, and to prevent, if possible, their fleet from sailing thence. From this time to the time of their sailing, that gallant Admiral had remained on that station, and he had no doubt that during his stay there, and from the time he quitted the station to his arrival in port, he would be able to give the most satisfactory reasons for every part of his conduct.

To proceed, however, with that degree of regularity which he could wish to observe in the detail of events as they occurred, his Lordship said he would begin with the departure of the French fleet from Brest, their procedure to the coast of Ireland, and return from thence, and then take a view of what was doing at the same time by our channel fleet under the command of Admiral Lord Bridport. This he considered as necessary, previous to taking any account of the transactions of Admiral Colpoys' fleet after the French had left Brest.

The

The French armament, his Lordship stated, left Brest under cover of a heavy fog on the 16th of December, on the 18th they arrived off the coast of Ireland. Some of them cast anchor in Bantry Bay, and remained there till the 6th of January. Owing to adverse winds and very stormy weather, which dispersed the greatest part of their fleet, they were not able to effect a landing. If they had, with only a force of five or six thousand men, from the then situation of the internal force of Ireland, there is every reason to believe that Cork must, with all its stores and provisions, have fallen into the hands of the enemy.

At all events, however, the facts shew that the French fleet, consisting of 18 sail of the line, full of troops, several frigates, and numerous transports, actually sailed from Brest, anchored in Bantry Bay, remained there, some of them during a period of eleven or twelve days, and afterwards with very inconsiderable loss, all of which was owing to storms and tempests, returned to their own ports without falling in with a single ship of the English navy to impede or molest them. His Lordship then begged to draw their attention to what was doing by the Channel or Lord Bridport's fleet during this time. On the 20th news arrived in England of the French fleet having left Brest. On the 22d, orders were sent to Lord Bridport to sail immediately with the fleet under his command; and by a letter from his Lordship to the Admiralty then on the table it appeared, that Lord Bridport could not sail till the 25th, on account of some of the ships of his squadron not being ready. On the evening of the 25th, however, he dropped down to St. Helen's, but, in doing so, the *Sans Pareil* and the *Prince* ran foul of each other, and one of them was so much damaged that she could not proceed. Lord Bridport was, therefore, delayed still further, and did not sail till the 29th or 30th. At that time, however, he sailed with seventeen sail of the line and some frigates, and proceeded directly for Ireland. He arrived with his squadron at Bantry Bay on the 8th of January, two days after the French had left it; and after cruizing in quest of them for several days, he finally returned to port, without having seen or fallen in with a single ship of the enemy. His Lordship then said, that he had no doubt of the great anxiety of admiral Lord Bridport to sail as speedily as possible, and therefore he could not but suppose; that, from the information he had received, respecting the mode of his sail-

ing down Channel, it must have been in consequence of orders received from the Admiralty. He had been told that, our fleet was never known to have sailed under so little sail as it had done on that occasion, and that otherwise if sail had been carried, Lord Bridport might have been off Bantry Bay two days sooner than he was. Another thing which appeared very extraordinary to him was, that after the noble admiral found the whole of the enemy's fleet had left that coast, he still continued cruizing off Bantry Bay during a day and a half before he proceeded any where else in quest of them. His Lordship said, that here it struck him forcibly as necessary to observe, that it appeared to him extremely negligent and blameable, that after Ministers had so long been informed of this intended armament at Brest, the fleet under Lord Bridport should not have been more numerous and all ready, than to oblige him to wait in consequence of an accident having happened only to two of them. In the next place, there appeared to be great blame that the fleet, such as it was in point of numbers, should be, on the 22d of December so far from ready, as that in consequence it could not sail till the 25th; surely it ought to have been ready to sail at an hour's notice. Thirdly, it appeared very extraordinary that Lord Bridport, from an accident to only two ships, should have been detained from sailing. Were there no other ships to replace them, either at Portsmouth or Plymouth? There seemed to be something very defective and negligent somewhere in this respect. It was a delay which certainly called for explanation. It had given rise to various conjectures. It had been ascribed by some to the want of money to victual the ships, by others to a want of money to pay the men. It had been accounted for from a division in the Cabinet, from a misunderstanding between Lord Bridport and the port-admiral, to a confusion which had taken place in the signals conveyed by the Telegraph, and to the caution of the noble person who had the command of the fleet. He did not doubt the zeal and anxiety of the noble admiral to meet the enemy, but it certainly was a proper subject for enquiry in whom the delay originated, and upon what grounds it had taken place. On not finding the French fleet in Bantry Bay, Lord Bridport did not repair off Brest, but instead of it he went and cruized off Ushant. The noble admiral, he again repeated, he was fully convinced, had not been deficient in his duty, and that he had acted in conformity to his instructions.

Whether

Whether these orders were the best which could have been given, considering all the circumstances of the case, was a point for the Admiralty to explain.

Lord Albemarle then proceeded to make some observations upon admiral Colpoys's squadron. He called for an explanation of the causes of its return when admiral Colpoys knew that the French fleet was at sea. It was incumbent upon the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty to shew that he had been driven into port by the severity of the weather, if he did not mean to prefer against the commander of that squadron, one of the most serious charges which could be preferred against any officer, or if he did not mean to take blame to himself for not having the ships properly victualled. His Lordship read extracts from several letters of admiral Colpoys, given in the printed papers before the House, stating, that the ships under his command were in want of fuel and water, and as it was styled of essential articles, and that the weather was so violent that he could not distribute provisions from those ships which were best supplied to the rest. The fleet seemed to have been much in want of water, as the *Powerful*, which was victualled for foreign service, and took 200 tons on board, returned into port with only four tons. He inferred from this, that the *Powerful* had been obliged to supply some of the rest of the ships. It was not fair to state the average quantity of water on board the fleet on its return to port, as was done in one of the papers on the table, because some ships might be in want when others had abundance; and it was well known that in tempestuous weather there was no possibility of distributing it from one ship to another. Fuel was another article of which there was said to have been a great scarcity on board the fleet, and of which there was no return upon the table. This, however, he informed their Lordships was not his fault, as he had come down on a former day with an intention of moving for this return, but was deterred by the first Lord of the Admiralty mentioning that the Admiralty usually got no return of this article, and that it could not be procured without considerable difficulty and a good deal of time. His Lordship lastly adverted to the conduct of admiral Elphinstone, who, instead of joining some of the squadrons then at sea, with the *Magnanime* and the other ships under his command, came to St *Helen's* on that very day that Lord Bridport put to sea. Lord Albemarle concluded with expressing his firm persuasion that the facts to

which he had alluded, and the particulars he had mentioned, were amply sufficient to induce their Lordships to enter into the enquiry he was about to propose. He should therefore move,

“ That this House do resolve itself into a Committee, to enquire into the measures taken for the protection of Ireland, by a naval force upon the late attempted Invasion.”

Earl *Spencer* rose avowedly to defend the conduct of the Board of Admiralty, and shew that it did not merit the imputations that had been cast on it, respecting a matter which was certainly of great importance, viz. the protection of Ireland by a naval force upon the late attempted invasion. When he said this, he was ready to admit that the noble Earl had brought forward his motion with great candour, and he was desirous of giving the House the fullest explanation upon the subject, confident that with that explanation, and with the lights which the papers on the table threw upon the whole matter, the most satisfactory proof would be afforded that the Admiralty had done every thing that the circumstances of the case would permit to human foresight, and the most anxious attention to the interests of the country, and that no one of the gallant officers, to whom it had been necessary to allude, had been in the smallest degree to blame. Before he proceeded further, he thought it necessary to say a word or two as to an expression of his when notice was first given by the noble Earl of his intention to bring forward such a motion. He certainly had said, that if the circumstance was to happen again, he would pursue precisely the same measures that he had taken. That expression fell from him in the warmth of debate, and he did not mean to retract it, but he wished to qualify it, by saying that he meant that had the Board of Admiralty no other information nor intelligence before them, than that on which they were obliged to act at the time, and on that point their Lordships would find that much of the explanation he was about to offer depended, as under different intelligence, the Admiralty would certainly have thought it their duty to pursue a different line of conduct. But why had not they better information? The noble Earl asked: It certainly, he allowed, was fairly expected of a government which had secret service money at its command, that it should obtain, by means of its agents, information to which the public had not access, and they were bound to obtain the best possible intelligence respecting the motives of the enemy. There was no noble Lord in that House who ever had assisted in his Majesty's Councils who must

must not have been sensible that it was impossible at all times to obtain correct information respecting the plans and designs of an enemy. A government might some times have too much as well as too little information, and when, from different quarters they got different intelligence, it became a matter of uncertainty how they ought to act. In the present instance he was convinced that the Admiralty had acted in the best manner possible upon the information which they had. But, for this assertion, he must claim credit from the House, unsupported by the documents on which it rested. For every noble Lord must be aware that it was impossible to lay that information before the House, consistently with the safety of the persons by whom it was communicated, and wherever that was the case, extracts of letters, which were naturally liable to suspicion, and might have the harsh term of being *garbled* applied to them, must be laid before the House, instead of the entire letters. It certainly was an inconvenience to which the king's servants must at all times submit, and for his own part he had no scruple to declare that however necessary to his own exculpation or defence the whole of a letter might be, when it contained matters of a delicate nature not proper for the public eye, he would rather be thought to have acted negligently, where he was conscious he had done his duty, than from motives of a personal nature be led to forget that higher duty of caution, which a due sense of the more important interests of his country required at his hands. The noble Earl he observed had arranged his argument in a singular manner, and therefore he should take the liberty of reversing the arrangement that the noble Earl had thought proper to adopt. One would naturally have imagined that his Lordship would have led the attention of the House first to the situation of the fleet under admiral Colpoys, and the conduct of that gallant officer, as soon as he learnt from Sir Edward Pellew that the French fleet under cover of the fogs that prevailed in those long nights, had got out of Brest, and escaped the vigilance of the admiral's frigates, a circumstance not at all warranting any imputation of blame to admiral Colpoys, because at such a season as the 16th of December, when the French fleet ventured out of Brest, it was too much to expect that in such weather their passing the British Squadron must necessarily have been detected. Instead, however of adverting to the situation of admiral Colpoys and the fleet under his command, the noble Earl had first entered into a discussion
of

of the conduct of Lord Bridport, the orders he from time to time received, the accident that happened to the Prince in consequence of the Sans Pareil running foul of her in dropping down to St. Helens, and the delay that attended the sailing of his Lordship's fleet. In arguing on these topics, the noble Earl had reasoned as if it was the only fleet prepared to meet the enemy, in case of an attack upon any part of the coasts of the two kingdoms. He had fallen into the vulgar error that had prevailed at the time, of considering it as the fleet of England, or as some of the newspapers had erroneously termed it, the grand Channel fleet, whereas a powerful division of the Channel fleet under admiral Colpoys, had been for some months stationed off Brest to watch the motions of the enemy, and to attack any fleet that should attempt to sail out of that port. With respect to admiral Colpoys's squadron being so long at sea, he confessed that he was friendly to the system of making fleets frequently change their station. In the present case, however, the squadron under the command of that gallant admiral had been kept out of port longer than usual, and longer than he owned was desirable, by Sir Roger Curtis, who had gone in quest of admiral Richery, and who was to succeed admiral Colpoys on the Brest station, arriving a fortnight later in port than was expected. He affirmed, however, that that fleet was not forced to come into port by a want of necessaries as suggested by the noble Earl, but that it was driven up channel by tempestuous weather. Water they certainly had not in very great abundance; but the *Powerful* had less in proportion than any other ship, not from having distributed part of her store to the rest of the fleet, but from having used a greater quantity than was common. When he said this, he did not mean to throw the least reflection upon the gallant commander of that ship; but there was no one acquainted with sea affairs who did not know that more water was used on board of some ships than others; and certainly the *Powerful* had consumed more than had been thought necessary. After the French fleet had eluded the vigilance of admiral Colpoys, to whom he wished to give every degree of credit for his active and enterprising services on his station, he contended, that the gallant officer adopted the wisest course which it was possible for him to take. He repaired off the Lizard Point, finding from the tempestuousness of the weather, he could not remain off Brest, and that certainly was the station in which he was most likely either to re-
ceive

ceive intelligence of the enemy, or further orders from the Admiralty. Even here, however, he could not keep his station, and was obliged to come into the nearest port.

Earl Spencer next proceeded to vindicate the conduct of the fleet under Admiral Lord Bridport. As soon as the Admiralty got intelligence of the sailing of the French fleet, orders were sent to Lord Bridport to prepare for sea with all possible expedition, as would be seen by adverting to Mr. Nepean's letter to his Lordship, No. 7, and Lord Bridport's answer, No. 8, of the printed papers. The ships under his command could not be got ready, however, till the 25th of December, five days after the date of the order. This delay was occasioned by some of the ships of Sir Roger Curtis's squadron, and which were to go out with Lord Bridport, needing repair. As soon, however, as they were ready for sea, which was on the 25th, they dropped down to St. Helen's; and here his Lordship observed, that the noble Lord had asked why Lord Bridport did not proceed to sea with nine ships of the line, instead of waiting for the other six, which were to join him from Spithead? He assured the noble Lord that it was not owing to either of the strange causes that he had suggested; it neither arose from the want of money to victual ships, the want of money to pay the men, a division among his Majesty's Ministers, a misunderstanding between the Port Admiral and the Admiral of the fleet, nor from a confusion of the Telegraph signals; in fact, it was impossible that it should have happened from either of them. The victualling the ships lay entirely with the Victualling Office, who took the provisions out of the King's stores, and could not want money to enable them to do so; and, gallant and faithful as our sailors were, it was, for obvious reasons, not usual to advance them any pay till the very day before they sailed; nor was there any misunderstanding between Lord Bridport; and as to the Telegraph, that would have had an extraordinary property indeed, if, in such foggy weather, it could have conveyed any signal whatever. The truth was, the noble Admiral acted in obedience to his instructions, which were sent before the Admiralty knew the course which the French fleet had taken, and before they knew that Admiral Colpoys had returned to port. Had the noble Admiral known that, at that moment, there were seven ships of the enemy anchored in Bantry Bay, he would not have hesitated for a moment to put to sea, if it had been practicable. He must remark, however, that from the state of the wind and tide that might have been impracticable; for he understood, that when the wind blew from South-East, ships could not sail from St. Helen's,

Helen's, except when the tide was fair, and at that time it was extremely adverse. His Lordship read extracts from several letters from Sir Peter Parker, the Port Admiral at Spithead, the substance of which was, that the ships destined to join Lord Bridport, at St. Helen's, could not sail, on account of the adverse winds. From all these circumstances, which his Lordship dwelt on with great minuteness and fulness of detail, it so happened that Lord Bridport could not put to sea till the 3d of January; and it so happened, also, that the French fleet eluded his vigilance. That fleet, composed in all of 15 sail of the line, and which was originally destined to relieve Admiral Colpoys off Brest, would have been sufficient and bold enough to have encountered 17 sail of any enemy's fleet. He stated that Admiral Colpoys would also have had 17 sail of the line, if several of his ships had not been disabled. The delay in Lord Bridport's sailing, he had already shewn, was owing to none of the causes insinuated by the noble mover of this enquiry, but was imputable to the nature of the tides and the contrary winds. Lord Bridport sailed as soon as practicable, and it would have been imprudent to have sailed down Channel under a press of sail during the long dark nights and stormy weather. It was only on the 31st of December last that intelligence was received from Admiral Kingsmill, of the French fleet being off Ireland; and on the 3d of January Lord Bridport sailed from St. Helen's, and was off Cape Clear on the 7th. Whilst his Lordship lamented that various concurring, yet unavoidable, circumstances prevented the capture of the French fleet, he at the same time remarked that the enemy had no cause to boast of their success, having lost in the expedition 11 ships of war, 4000 men, and a proportionable quantity of stores. He could by no means allow, however, that Ireland owed its safety to the winds and tempestuous weather; on the contrary, it was the winds, and the winds and weather only, which prevented the French fleet from being destroyed, either by Admiral Colpoys or Lord Bridport. The Earl slightly touched on the conduct of Admiral Elphinstone, and the disposition of his force, which had been adverted to on this occasion. The conduct of that gallant officer spoke best for itself, and his history was to be read in the important services he had rendered his country. In fine, his Lordship again and again contended, that the *salvation* of the French fleet was entirely owing to the effects of the weather and of the wind; he meant with respect to their falling into the hands of the British fleet; for, in other respects, it was notorious that they had materially suffered by the weather: eleven of their ships
were

were lost, and upwards of 4000 men. He insisted that, upon a review of the whole circumstances, no blame could be fairly imputed either to the Board of Admiralty, or to the gallant Admiral and officers who served upon the occasion. On the contrary, he thought both worthy praise, instead of censure, and, thinking of it in this manner, he certainly must think the proposed enquiry wholly unnecessary. He rested with confidence on the decision of the House, conscious that the whole of what had taken place proceeded from causes out of the reach of human controul. He stood acquitted to himself. He could not command what depended on the weather and the elements. Having entered into this long and circumstantial explanation, the Earl said, he trusted he had not idly intruded on the time of the House; but he should not do justice to the known zeal of Lord Bridport, and his acknowledged gallantry and spirit, if he did not say, that he knew his Lordship had felt the greatest anxiety to put to sea to meet the enemy, and that nothing could equal that anxiety but his disappointment and vexation at not being able to sail sooner. He hoped, and indeed he was persuaded, their Lordships would consider the papers upon their table as superseding the necessity of any enquiry. He should therefore give his decided negative to the motion of the noble Lord.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, when I had the honour of addressing myself to your Lordships the other night, notice being then given for the motion now in discussion, I am sensible that I might seem to express myself with more warmth and eagerness than the subject at that time appeared to justify. But, under the apprehension that the same mode of explanation, or defence, might be attempted here that was pursued in another place, I thought it my duty, as strongly as I was able, to warn the noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty against it; conceiving that a case made out from a partial selection of papers, could make little impression upon those accustomed to the stubborn rules of judicial proceedings, not liable to yield to the seductions of ingenious declamation, nor to surrender their judgments to any thing short of a complete knowledge of the whole of the case upon which they were to decide. While I confess that, in one point of view, the mode which has obtained here carries a shew of fairness and candour, inasmuch that some time has been given to the investigation of the papers laid upon the table, I cannot, nevertheless, help deeply lamenting that this explanation was not produced voluntarily by the First Lord of the Admiralty, unprovoked by any motion in either House of Parliament, and at a much earlier

period; produced in order to fling light, if light can be flung, upon these mysterious transactions, to calm the agitations of the public mind, and hinder that distrust of the management of the navy from gathering and encreasing, which I am concerned to observe daily spreading, highly injurious to that service to which this motion particularly relates.

Another advantage would have attended a more early production of this explanation: the House would have benefited by the presence of a person much interested in this discussion (Admiral Lord Bridport), whose authority as to the establishment of facts, or unravelling difficulties, would have been on this occasion of the greatest weight and importance.

Leaving observations of a general nature, I shall proceed to the examination of four or five points, all of them connected with the motion this day submitted to the House. I am sorry to say, the papers upon the table are little calculated to remove the darkness that remains enveloping each of them; and still less the speech this moment delivered by the First Lord of the Admiralty.

The point to which I shall endeavour to draw the attention of the House,

In the first place, is the smallness of the prepared force under Admiral Lord Bridport.

In the second, to that Admiral not being ready to sail before the 25th, the news of the French having left Brest arriving on the 20th.

In the third, the omission of a most material order to Vice Admiral Colpoys to make Ireland his first care, upon missing the enemy coming out from Brest.

In the fourth, the omission of an equally important order to Admiral Lord Bridport to repair immediately to Ireland, even with the force he had at St. Helen's, instead of anchoring there on the 29th of December.

In the fifth, the omission of an order to send out instantly again as many of Vice Admiral Colpoys' ships as could put to sea after their return.

After stating these, it will be considered how the papers bear upon them.

As to the smallness of Lord Bridport's force, nothing is to be found contained in the papers flinging any light upon this extraordinary circumstance. We know we have in commission 124 ships of the line; that the naval war is much confined to European seas; that the purse of Great Britain has been most wisely and liberally open to every demand of the Admiralty for this service, the basis of our present and our future security; that

that we have to contend with the last shreds and remnants of the French marine, and that the Admiralty must have been in possession of the French preparations even before the period when the general alarm of invasion was sounded, at the meeting of Parliament, to the people of England. With this knowledge we find the fleet at home so nicely measured with the known force of the enemy, that accidents happening to two or three of Lord Bridport's squadron, would render his sailing without those ships too great a risk in the opinion of that commander, and of the First Lord of the Admiralty. I ask, why had not Lord Bridport a force to allow of similar accidents? Let us hear whether there was not sufficient time to have afforded him a larger force? What would have been our condition, had the elements either dispersed or driven Admiral Colpoys so far to the South as to have left the French fleet at liberty to pursue any object it aimed at. A ship or two running foul of each other locks up in port the whole remaining force of England, and leaves, as was the case, the sister kingdom at the mercy of an insulting and invading enemy.

When we recollect the circumstances of the American war, great as our difficulties were, numerous and powerful as were the combined forces of our enemies on the ocean; when we had the East Indies to guard, and the West Indies to protect; when also a Channel fleet was indispensable for our security; with the French marine in its greatest strength and vigour, joined to all that Spain and Holland could give to aid their common cause, no disaster ever occurred during that period in our naval operations that ever clouded the brows of Englishmen like the present, or stung their hearts with such vexation and disappointment. The noble Lord at the head of the Admiralty has not approached in his speech this great radical mischief. I hope I have said enough upon it to invite his attention to it, and gain for the public some explanation before we part.

Turning to the second point, the fleet under Lord Bridport not being ready before the 25th: on this the papers afford as little satisfaction as on the other. We perceive the news of the French fleet being actually at sea reaches the Admiralty on the 20th. That Board gives orders to Lord Bridport to go as soon as possible in search of them. In answer it is stated, that the condition of the Orion, the Prince George, and the Atlas, will not permit the sailing of the fleet before the 25th. And the First Lord of the Admiralty states, the fleet at Portsmouth was ready: *a fleet is ready that can put to sea, in three or four days from the time orders are received for sailing.* Good God!

of what consequence those days have been to this country ! Three or four days under these circumstances were *an eternity* ; the wind being fair, of a value and consequence beyond all measure, all calculation. To have been, indeed, ready, we might have thought, from the hour that we knew of what was passing at Brest, the British fleet would have prepared for days, nay weeks, before, to have weighed at a moment's warning, and every ship clear of the land in the shortest possible time. There is no comprehending this delay, unless we adopt a reasoning held out in another place ; that readiness, by continuing ready, may be unready ; as *health for want of change becomes disease*. Such refined consolations are addressed to different understandings from mine. The public has to consider whether, upon an actual landing of the enemy upon this island, or Ireland, it ought to have been satisfied when told, True, the enemy is in the bosom of the country, but in three or four days a fleet will be ready to resent the insult.

Let me not be understood to mean, that when Ireland seemed to be neglected, that a nearer care was partially directed to our own coasts : I insinuate no such thing. I tax the King's Ministers with no such stupid leanings, or better attention, towards this part of the King's dominions than to the other. They must, with every rational being, feel Ireland and England are the same. No sea rolls between, or divides their interests.

I come now to the third point, viz. the omission of a positive order to Vice Admiral Colpoys, in the case of missing the French fleet, to ascertain the safety of Ireland.

Vice Admiral Colpoys was left to his discretion, which he exercised as a man of sense, a good seaman, and an able officer. I complain that he was so abandoned to his discretion : left to himself, upon discovering six line of battle ships steering for Brest, after he was informed the enemy was out of port, he reasoned well that the fleet had met with some discomfiture, that they could not mean the invasion of this country, that their utmost effort must be to point towards an attack on Portugal, and that agreeable to the conjectures of that able officer, Sir Edward Pellew, that they had stood to the South. I repeat my complaint, that the best founded or most ingenious conjecture was suffered to operate on his conduct. His order should have been couched in these terms : Upon losing sight of the enemy's fleet, *make Ireland sure*. If you cannot follow in its wake, the chances are fifty to one, that the enemy has steered another course ; *make Ireland sure*. Neglecting this positive direction,

direction, we had the safety of Ireland placed in the same scale as that of Portugal.

This brings me to the consideration of the fourth point, intimately connected with the foregoing: the omission of a similar order to Admiral Lord Bridport to put to sea with any ships, admitting his number was reduced by accidents to eight or ten.

Had the order alluded to been given to Vice Admiral Colpoys to flee for Ireland, no danger would have attended, had Lord Bridport been ordered to repair to the same place. When the French were found, if in Ireland, there would, in obedience of the order on which so much stress is laid, be found at least a part of Admiral Colpoys' division; a reinforcement, if wanted, would have done every thing. The destination led to no danger arising from disparity of force. But no such instruction was thought necessary. Admiral Lord Bridport was to join Admiral Colpoys, make himself 17 sail, and then to look into Ireland, provided he receives information of the French fleet having directed their course there.

The last remaining point may perhaps have its explanation; my imagination does not suggest it. The not sending immediately to sea any part of Vice Admiral Colpoys' squadron as could go out again, to pick up such of the enemy's ships, then known to be in distress from weather, as might have escaped Admiral Lord Bridport's fleet.

Much have we heard asserted, that Admiral Colpoys was not necessitated to return from want of water or provision. We have had great stress laid upon an *aggregate of provisions* of his squadron. It is of little importance to know whether some ships had an abundance, others a deficiency. The only question worth an answer is, whether water, fuel, &c. could be shifted in that season, in those seas, with any safety to the boats so employed? But take it that all this could be performed in the month of December, in the Bay of Biscay, as some think it might be performed upon the Thames, it only proves that some of the squadron might as well have been sent again to sea, as remain in port. This idea of an aggregate of provisions could only, I conceive, originate in the imagination of a landsman.

Having, in this manner, presumed to submit to the House these different points for its consideration, it is with this assembly to determine, whether the papers on the table, or the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty, are calculated to elucidate them. If these do inform us what satisfactory ground the fleet under Lord Bridport was not more powerful as to
numbers;

numbers; why those days, from the 21st to the 25th were so fatally lost: why the safety of his Majesty's dominions was not made the first and nearest care of the Admiralty, and why no use was made of the ships returned with Vice Admiral Colpoys, then, no possible utility can arise from farther enquiry. But if these do not, (as I maintain they do not) afford that necessary information to your Lordships and the nation at large, they leave the same vexation and disappointment festering in the public bosom; the same apprehension, the same distrust as to the management of the navy; and the same sickening reflections, that had prudential wisdom dictated the orders so often alluded to, an opportunity might have been seized of striking an annihilating blow to the naval power of France. I shall not now attempt to point what might have been the consequences of such a blow. It is not presumption to suppose it might have opened a short and even road to *Peace*.

The Marquis of *Abercorn* said, that he would state to the House, why he had for a moment continued to offer himself to their Lordships' attention after the noble Earl had appeared upon his legs. It was because he heard many of their Lordships call upon him, and he had not heard scarcely any name the noble Earl. With respect to the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty, no man could entertain a higher respect for him than he did; he had known and respected him from his earliest years. When at school, they had been on friendly terms, and though he had not been in the habits of intimacy since, nothing like matter of offence had ever passed between them. He did not think, however, that any considerations of personal regard ought to prevent any noble Lord from speaking his sentiments freely on public occurrences; nor could the noble Earl be offended that his public Administration should be made the subject of Parliamentary discussion. That he took to be fair public ground, fit to be taken in that House, and that the noble Earl would not feel himself entitled to complain, if upon that ground he came forward that day. Upon several points he differed materially from the noble Earl. With regard to the conduct of the war, it was not perhaps convenient to deliver his full sentiments on the present occasion. With regard to the merits of Sir John Jervis, it was sufficient barely to name him; his exploits required no commemoration or panegyric. It had been said on a former day that the first Lord of the Admiralty ought to be careful how he allowed
a British

a British fleet to perform so signal an exploit as that which Sir John Jervis had achieved over such decided superiority of numbers. He had been that day on the point of rising to shew that success with unequal numbers was not a new circumstance in the present war, but a moment's recollection inclined him to think, that the allusion in question might appear invidious, and he was ready to admit that such was the splendour of Sir John Jervis's victory, that the honours of the day ought to be all his own. He might, however, now say, and he hoped it would be recollected, that this was not the first occasion during the present war, in which a British officer was enabled to signalize his gallantry, and to crown himself with glory from a similar inequality. Their Lordships would recollect that they had returned their thanks to Admiral Cornwallis, and his brave captain, captain Whitby, for his astonishing exploit which he had performed in engaging and beating off a French Squadron of thirteen sail of the line with only five. When they thanked that brave officer upon that occasion (and it was the least tribute they could bestow) he did not expect that the same disparity would have afforded an opportunity for a display of gallantry and skill in all its circumstances, perhaps still more astonishing and more important in its consequences. He hoped, however, that he should not find that Sir John Jervis should experience a similar reward, and the next thing they should hear would be, that Ministers as they had already done in a similar instance, deprived him and captain Calder, in the vigour of life, of the opportunity of again signalising that gallantry and skill which they had displayed, nor as a reward for their former zeal, deprive them of the means of again exerting it in the service of their country. He hoped their Lordships would pardon him for this digression, which they might consider indeed as not wholly unconnected with the present subject. He should proceed to consider the question immediately before them for their decision. In discussing the expediency of a Parliamentary enquiry upon the present subject, he was desirous to put out of view all captious objections to particular measures, and to wave every consideration of what papers it might be hurtful to the public service to produce. In a war, however, in which failure had succeeded failure, it was the right and the duty of Parliament to enquire, and it was the interest of Ministers, if their conduct was unexceptionable, that the investigation should take place. We were now in the fifth year
of

of a war marked with a melancholy series of reverses and misfortunes, in which plan after plan had miscarried. In the course of this unfortunate period, our patience, to say no more, had kept pace with our disasters, our disgraces, and our calamities. Never had we been engaged in a war in which so many opportunities of acting with advantage, had in a manner pressed themselves upon Ministers and been so ill improved. Not one of them had been seized with judgment, no vestige of profit or advantage from them now remained or could be traced. All the repulses, all the calamities, however, which this country had ever encountered, sunk before the disgraceful attempt with which Ireland had been threatened and insulted, with impunity. He did not say that Ministers were to blame in this affair, for it was not his disposition or his habit, to prejudge the conduct of any man, or any set of men of what description soever they might be, but if ever there was subject for enquiry, it was this. The period to which the enquiry should extend, was certainly, as the noble Lord spoke last had observed, to a period previous to the earliest dates of the papers laid upon the table. The Ministers had been in possession of intelligence of the designs of the enemy previous to October, and it was their duty not to have trusted the safety of Ireland to the chance of winds and waves. It was their duty to have prepared for its defence, and to have arranged the force and distribution of their fleets, with a view to that enterprise which they knew would be attempted. Ireland was the principal object which the view of this subject presented. Upon this head, however, he felt himself entangled and perplexed. Were he to explain himself fully he should surprise their Lordships. But he never wished to say more than caution dictated. Was it not an aggravation of the blame, wherever it rested, that upon this naval defence alone the safety of Ireland was staked? To place it in a state of internal preparation no exertion had been made, no measure had been taken. To call this a most criminal neglect, was to give it the softest term. It was a neglect by which Ministers had trifled with that important stake which this country had in the fate of Ireland, with that union of mutual interest inseparable as that of soul and body—a neglect by which they had trifled with the property of thousands and the happiness of millions, by which they had put to hazard the brightest jewel in the British diadem. With regard to the papers produced, he did not think they proved much in
favour

favour of Ministers. To establish a justification of Ministers, these papers ought to have proved four points—that this country had a sufficient fleet ready for sea; that Admiral Colpoys' fleet was sufficiently strong to keep the sea; that Admiral Colpoys was sufficiently provided with stores, &c. and that as the noble Earl who had just sat down had well observed, Admiral Colpoys had received particular orders to turn his attention to Ireland, and to proceed there as soon as he received intelligence that the French fleet had sailed. None of these points, however, appeared from the papers to have been regarded, at least they were not made out. In fact, the papers on the table, confidently as the noble Earl relied on them, were nothing more than such as any Administration could produce, and gave no satisfaction on this particular and important case. On the contrary, it was proved that Admiral Colpoys had been too long at sea, that he was not sufficiently provided with stores, &c. and above all, it proved, beyond dispute, that no particular attention had been paid to Ireland, nor any positive orders given to Admiral Colpoys to make its safety his principal object. The Marquis proceeded to consider the state of Admiral Colpoys' fleet, and contended that every fact respecting it either stated in the papers on the table, or by the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty, in his speech that day, served to shew that the conduct of the Admiralty had been deserving of censure, he, therefore, could not have the smallest hesitation to vote for the enquiry.

Earl *Spencer* said, that if the motion for an enquiry were carried, he should consider it neither more nor less than a censure on the Admiralty Board, a return which the Admiralty little merited, as he was conscious that every precaution had been taken, every means used to prevent the unfortunate circumstances that had occurred, first in the escape of the French fleet out of Brest, unobserved by Admiral Colpoys and unknown by him for six days, next by the unexpected but unavoidable delay of the sailing of Lord Bridport, and last of all, which was most to be lamented, the failure of Lord Bridport's sailing in with the French fleet, all of them circumstances which every noble Lord must lament, and none more sincerely than himself, because he was convinced, from the known spirit, skill, and bravery of Lord Bridport, that had he had the good fortune of meeting the enemy he would have given their Lordships and the public a very good account of them. With regard to what the noble Earl who

spoke immediately after he sat down, had said that Ministers ought to have sent an order to admiral Colpoys to make for Ireland with his squadron, as soon as he learnt that the French fleet had sailed from Brest, and could not learn their destination, he should have thought him and the rest of his Majesty's Ministers highly to blame, if they had done any such thing. Did noble Lords consider what consequences might have followed? Suppose admiral Colpoys had been able to reach Ireland, and the French fleet should have been driven by the hard south easterly gales, which then prevailed up Channel, as admiral Colpoys was, what would have been the situation of this country with a formidable French fleet close upon our coasts, between the fleet of admiral Colpoys and those of our ports and arsenals on which the preservation of our navy depended? He repeated what he began with, viz. that an enquiry would necessarily imply a censure on the Admiralty, that he was conscious no censure was merited; that every attention had been paid to avert mischance, and ensure an attack on the French fleet which had dared to insult the coast of Ireland under cover of the extreme dark and foggy weather that then prevailed, that the French fleet had sustained a capital loss, both of men and ships by so dangerous an enterprize, and that he himself had laboured night and day to forward the sailing of Lord Bridport's fleet, and to give the utmost dispatch to the execution of a plan calculated to add to the naval success of the present war, and which accident beyond human foresight, and tempestuous weather, had snatched from us, and thereby enabled the remnant of the French armament to get safe into port. He owned he was a little surprized, after the full explanation that he had given of all the circumstances which prevented admiral Colpoys from meeting with the French fleet, and which also rendered it impossible for Lord Bridport to put to sea sooner, which part of his argument he had particularly laboured, to hear noble Lords still continue to impute blame to the Board of Admiralty. While he had been in office he had deemed it his duty to make the utmost exertions in his power to further the public service, and such exertions he should most unremittingly continue, but he pretended only to mortal powers, and whenever any man should feel himself confident enough to undertake to contend against winds and waves, to govern the elements, and command the tides and seasons, he certainly would not have the arrogance to hold his situation one moment longer.

The

The Earl of *Moir* said that the generosity of the noble Earl had involved and perplexed his own defence. He had combined with his own defence the impracticable attempt of likewise covering his colleagues. When he came down to the House that day, he had imagined it would be impossible for him not to vote against the motion, because he conceived that it must imply a censure upon the first Lord of the Admiralty, to whom, in his opinion, no blame attached. The motion, however, now appeared to be of a more comprehensive nature, and to embrace more important objects. After what had already been urged, and especially after the forcible and eloquent manner in which the subject had been urged by the two Lords who spoke last, he should not trouble their Lordships with many observations. The real point he considered to be, why admiral Colpoys had not received orders to proceed to Ireland as soon as he received information that the French fleet had sailed? To this important point no satisfactory answer had been given. It was not enough to say, that in that case the French fleet might have got between our ports and the fleet of admiral Colpoys, and slipped up Channel. What prevented their doing so, as matters were managed? Though he was as confident as any man in the skill of our officers and the gallantry of our seamen, he did not think that very great inequality should be hazarded lightly. He was convinced, however, that admiral Colpoys's squadron was fully equal to that of the enemy, and all who knew that officer must regret that the forwardness of fortune had prevented him from obtaining that brilliant triumph which an opportunity of engaging the enemy would have afforded. Even if there had been a greater disparity of force, he hoped there could not have been much doubt of the event. The noble Earl had contended that from the mass of intelligence which Ministers received, it was impossible to decide the real object of the enemy's expedition. Did not the noble Earl know that it was the province of talents and ability to deduce causes and consequences from the materials with which they are furnished, and that on such occasions discernment is distinguished? It was idle to say that Ministers had not good information as to the object of the French expedition, he knew that Ministers were in possession of intelligence, and he was beyond measure surprised that they had not acted upon it. He had been at Dublin when the preparations of the enemy were going on, and the arms, stores, &c. with which they were provided, demonstrated the real point of their destination. That their design was to furnish

the discontented in Ireland with arms was evident. That their plan would prove abortive was to be hoped, as it did, and that even had they effected a landing, their attempts would have been unsuccessful; but before this happened Ministers had nothing to build upon, when they ought to have prepared every means of defence in their power. This point, however, did not affect the conduct of the Admiralty. If the best means of securing Ireland were not taken, it was the fault of Administration in general. The order to Admiral Colpoys to proceed to Ireland, must have issued from the Council; he was sure they had certain information of the enemy's designs, and it was at least a very criminal neglect that no proper measures of defence were adopted. Of any blame upon this head, he acquitted the first Lord of the Admiralty, and it was obvious that his defence, which with great generosity aimed at covering his colleagues, was an extremely unwise and imprudent one, and failed altogether of its object; he should vote for the enquiry, because he conceived it to extend to the conduct of Administration in general upon this subject; but, he voted for it, in the hope that it would not stop here, but that it would go farther; that it would embrace those objects which demanded investigation, and upon which the public expected to be satisfied. The name of Sir John Jervis could not be uttered without feelings of enthusiastic admiration, beyond the power of panegyric; but how dreadful would have been the consequences, had the event been different! What is the state, what are the resources, what are the prospects of this country in the present moment? If we go on with *patience*, to call it by so gentle a name, the nation can never rise again from its present situation; we had a chance, and but one chance to avoid ruin, and surely their last stake should be managed with wisdom. Shew the people that the House was determined not to oppose enquiry where mismanagement is either apparent or matter of well-grounded suspicion. That they are willing to give the tribute of praise and gratitude, when thanks and applause are merited, and that they are willing also to censure and to punish where censure and punishment are deserved.

To be ruined it was not necessary that the island should be sunk into the sea, or that its inhabitants should disappear. But when the adverse circumstances in which a nation is placed involve a confusion which affects the state of society, and no longer allows things to move in their usual course, and be managed as they have been for centuries, then that country may be said to be ruined. They should learn, there-
fo re,

fore, to appreciate their true satisfaction. He should vote for the enquiry in the hope that they would proceed farther, and shew to whom the disasters of the war are to be attributed, and examine why Ministers did not seize and improve the favourable opportunities which presented.

The Earl of *Liverpool* rose to support the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty, who had in his humble judgment unanswerably proved that every exertion had been made by government that the circumstances of the case would permit. He begged leave to call the attention of their Lordships to what had been the case in all former wars. If we had a Channel fleet equal to the enemy, that had been always deemed sufficient for our defence; that was the understanding in the whole course of the last war, and so it was in all our former wars; when we had such a fleet we had always felt ourselves secure, and no blame was ever imputed to Ministers for not providing a greater force. Whether that was the case in the present instance, was a point that did not seem to be much disputed, instead of one fleet, it was evident that we had two. The French had it was true seventeen ships, and admiral Colpoys had fifteen ships to face the enemy, but three of them were three deckers. As to the place to which he was to direct his force, he begged leave to say, it was not for the defence of Ireland exclusively, it was for the defence of every part of his Majesty's European dominions. It was a question where the fleet could be best stationed for the general defence of this nation; and he maintained that continuing off Brest, it was stationed in a place and situation, where it could operate the best for the defence of the nation, circumstanced as all things were at that moment, and stood as well, so as to be enabled to come to the defence of Ireland as any other part. Admiral Colpoys had orders to intercept the enemy's fleet going to any part of the world, and if at this time it appeared as probable that they were intended for Portugal as for Ireland, was it possible to imagine that if admiral Colpoys thought they were going for Ireland, he had such orders as did not leave him at liberty to follow them to Ireland? The admiral, viewing all the circumstances, took the resolution to remain on his station; and, from all the information which he had, the gallant admiral took his resolution rightly, and all that happened to disappoint his hopes and expectations, was owing to the wind, and to the darkness of the long nights in December. Sir Edward Pellew followed the French fleet, but he could never find admiral Colpoys to give him information, this was owing to adverse wind
and

and weather. As to the objection that our fleets were not ready to sail sooner, he thought the reasons assigned by his noble friend were quite sufficient to satisfy their Lordships. Government had not then information as to the probable destination of the fleet, and when they had, the days were so short, the tide adverse, and the weather was so unfavourable, that the fleet could not possibly sail sooner than it did. This appeared from the information of the port-admiral, for at this very time a West-India fleet was quite unable to come down to St. Helen's. Nor was it to be wondered at that the French either got out of Brest unknown to admiral Colpoys, or that admiral Colpoys could not meet with them, when he sailed after them. In the first instance they had escaped the vigilance of the admiral's out cruizers, and in the second, a frigate of admiral Kingsmill could not be discovered; nay, according to the French accounts of their own fleet in that expedition, it appeared that the French admiral and general, who must know to what place they were ordered to proceed, were on board a frigate, and they never saw the fleet, and were never able to find it until they returned again to their own port. The further proof that the elements were very tempestuous was, that while the French fleet were in Bantry Bay, they could not land a man, except the few who were driven on shore by the violence of the tempest. Had the British fleet followed the French at this time it might have suffered greatly, and therefore in that view the event was fortunate to us, as well as to the French in having escaped our fleet. Indeed the French had no reason to boast of success, as they had lost four of their ships and full 5000 men. Upon the whole view of the matter he was perfectly satisfied that every thing was done which human prudence was capable of under all the circumstances, and therefore he should not imply any censure upon Administration by assenting to this enquiry.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, he did not deem it necessary to intrude upon their Lordships' time long, the subject had been so well argued by the noble Earl, who spoke immediately in reply to the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty. There were however parts of the speech of the noble Earl who had just sat down that he could not pass over in silence. He had observed that admiral Colpoys had no light or information to guide him as to the destination of the French fleet. That he could not deny. That the House had not all the light they could desire from the noble Earl who is at the head of the Admiralty, he believed their Lordships could

could not deny. That noble Earl had indeed assured the House that the orders which were given were the very best that could be given. Perhaps his Majesty's Ministers might think that all the orders they gave were well arranged, and that if they gave any further explanation than they had done, they might convey improper and dangerous information to the enemy, and that therefore they reserve themselves for a fitter opportunity to explain the matter more fully. He apprehended, however, that what they had said in their own defence demonstrated the necessity of an enquiry. He confessed himself that he was but little satisfied with the consolation held out by the noble Earl who spoke last, that it was always held sufficient in former wars for us to equal the enemy with a Channel fleet, thereby insinuating that it would be sufficient for us to be so in this.—Such doctrine, he owned, appeared to him to be but a frigid consolation, after the repeated assertions that had been made that we had almost annihilated the maritime power of France. As little satisfaction did he receive from the general assertions of the noble Earl upon the wind and weather. None of these general observations or assertions appeared to him to answer the statements and the arguments of his noble relation, who had so fairly and so ably opened this subject before their Lordships, and which statement and arguments, called, in his opinion, for a full investigation of this important matter. His noble relative stated the case, as he ought to state it. He avoided minute particulars, which had no immediate bearing on the question, and brought before the House the prominent points which appeared to him to bear upon the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers. The noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty did the reverse of this. He avoided all the prominent points that bore upon the conduct of Ministers, and dwelt elaborately on minute particulars that had little or no bearing upon the main question, and this was what Ministers called exculpating themselves. He was willing, however, to do justice to the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty; for he thought he had proved by his conduct, that we ought not to fear meeting the enemy at sea with a very inferior force in point of number, and perhaps he might be inclined to hold his present situation until he should find some man arrogant enough to contend against the elements; but he should be sorry to see the noble Earl persist in that sort of firmness; and he was ready to confess that it appeared to him unaccountable, notwithstanding all that had been said,
that

that such an event as that of the Irish expedition should have taken place, when it was known that we had above an hundred ships of war in the European seas. But it had been said, true, an armament had been prepared at Brest, but at that time it was uncertain whether it was intended for Ireland, or for Portugal, and that the chance was equal. Now he would ask, Whether, supposing the chance to be equal, there was a man in this world who thought it would be wise in us to put Portugal in the scale against Ireland? Whether there was a man upon earth rash enough to put these two chances upon an equality with regard to the interest of this country in thwarting the expedition? Admiral Colpoys, he had no doubt, acted well, according to the information and instruction he received, but he must contend that, from the information which Ministers had received, he ought to have had positive orders to sail to Ireland. The whole case, in his opinion, rested on the situation of Ireland; and here it was notorious, from the documents which Ministers themselves had laid upon the table, that this fleet ought to have been in Ireland when the French were there; for Ministers had early information of the Brest fleet being to sail, and probably, at least, that they were destined for Ireland. Indeed, they could not even deny that they had information, or that they ought to have had it, considering the vast sums of money that they were allowed for obtaining intelligence. They might have judged, they ought indeed to have known, from the arms that were on board, and from the nature of the equipment, that it was destined for Ireland. It was evident, from the nature of the equipment, that the French were going to a place where they thought they should meet with a number of men to join them, and therefore they carried arms with them to put into the hands of such men: they were deceived in that expectation, and he was very glad of it; but that was a circumstance for which we could not be indebted to Ministers. He really thought that the House had nothing more to do than to read the papers upon their table, and to attend to the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty, in order to be satisfied of the necessity of enquiry; and the question now simply was, in his opinion, Whether, upon an evident necessity, their Lordships would now agree to go into an enquiry to satisfy themselves, and to satisfy the public also, or continue a blind confidence in Ministers, and deceive the public. The Duke concluded with declaring, that the motion should have his decided support.

Lord Hood next addressed the House as follows. My Lords, from some expressions that have fallen from noble Lords on the opposite

opposite side of the House, I must beg your Lordships' indulgence for a few words.

Giving, my Lords, the noble Earl who brought forward the present motion full credit for thinking himself well founded in all he has said, and even admitting that appearances may have very forcibly struck his mind, of errors in the management and disposition of his Majesty's fleet, yet I must totally dissent from the noble Earl, from a conviction that no good can, and that much mischief must, unavoidably arise from the proposed enquiry, at this time, when every heart and hand ought most cordially to be united, not only for the preservation of all we hold dear and valuable, but even for the very salvation of the kingdom; and whatever difference of opinion there may be upon the present question, I think there can be but one, that, previous to the end of last summer, the misfortunes and disappointments we have unhappily experienced in the course of the very just and necessary war into which we have been forced, can be attributed only to the elements, and to the very strange, unaccountable, and perfidious conduct of the court of Spain. I therefore hope, my Lords, I shall not witness the shadow of despondency in any of your Lordships; and confidently trust, that, by vigorous exertions in the several departments of the state, the nation's wishes (by the blessings of divine Providence) will soon be completely gratified by a successful and honourable termination of the war.

With respect, my Lords, to the whispers that have been sent abroad, and secretly encouraged, against a noble Lord whom I am proud to stand in near connection to, and also against those gallant officers Vice Admiral Colpoys and Vice Admiral Lord Keith; they are undeserving any notice, because I know they dare not openly be avowed. Yet this, my Lords, I cannot refrain from saying, that, from the strictest enquiry into the conduct of each, it will be found, I am very confident, in every part perfectly correct, full of zeal for the public service, and highly creditable to them.

But one principle, my Lords, either in Parliament, or in the line of my profession, has guided my conduct, that of strict duty to my King and country, and a very sincere attachment to his Majesty's Government and our glorious Constitution; and nothing that can happen to me, however much and painful I may feel it, will ever make me depart from that principle; and a consciousness of having discharged my duty, with zeal and industry, as a faithful servant of the public, in the several situations in which I have had the honour to be placed,

will bear me up against every misfortune, and afford much consolation in my decline of life.

I avail myself, my Lords, and am happy in this opportunity, of impressing upon your Lordships, that I have not been indifferent to being thrown upon the shelf in the present state of the country, for whilst I had a foot to stand upon, and my mental faculties (such as they are) were unimpaired, it would have been my pride to have gone on doing my best to the end of the war, had I been so permitted. It has, however, my Lords, been otherwise decreed, and, as I was inclined to conclude, for wise and beneficial purposes to the state, it became me, consistent with my feelings of duty to it, silently to submit, irksome as it was, without complaining.

I beg pardon, my Lords, for the trespass I have committed upon your Lordships' time, and shall only add my most decided disapprobation of the noble Earl's motion.

Lord *Auckland* said, that, feeling and sharing the fatigue which the House had undergone, he would not enter into any detailed discussion of the papers on the table, but would confine himself to a few general remarks, resulting from the impression which the debate had made upon his mind. He would readily acknowledge the nature and magnitude of the national disappointment. The most ardent imagination of the noble Lords who were that day censuring the management of the Admiralty could not go beyond his ideas of the advantages which would have been obtained towards deciding the fate of the war, and towards confirming the prosperity and security of the British empire, if either the squadron commanded by Admiral Colpoys, or that commanded by Lord Bridport, had fortunately met with the French fleet between the coast of Ireland and the port of Brest. He would farther admit, that the sense of our disappointment had occasioned a grievous and calamitous depression in the mind of the people both in Great Britain and in Ireland. Perhaps he might add, that it had been the great operative cause of the convulsion in the public credit. And here he must be permitted to call their Lordships' attention to the strange paradox exhibited to the present age, and to history. This kingdom, armed beyond all example, with a fleet of 120 ships of the line, with more than 300 frigates and other vessels of force, and with two or three hundred thousand men in arms within the country, is drooping under an alarm of a French invasion! This same kingdom, holding a more extensive and more valuable dominion than any nation ever before possessed, and enjoying an unparalleled extent of commerce,

commerce, prosperity, and opulence, is for the moment in a position approaching to public bankruptcy ! uniting the extremes of power and of wealth with the opposite extremes of helplessness and poverty ! Such had been the effects of an exaggerated impression upon an enlightened and informed people, remarkable in other occurrences for their characteristic bravery, energy, firmness, and consistency. Their Lordships, however, would not give way to this infirmity of the human mind ; they would not suffer their judgment to be warped by the frowardness of fortune (as the noble Earl, Lord Moira, had well expressed it), by a change of war, by a change of wind, or of weather. The nation, influenced by the example of its Parliament, would bear, as became it, the dispensations of Providence, and would manfully redouble those exertions for which Providence has left to us most ample means. Such, at least, was the sentiment which would decide his opinion in a case where he was unable by any fair deduction, or unprejudiced reasoning, to trace any default in the executive conduct of the navy. It was an uncontested truth, that, at the time when the French armament sailed from Brest, we had a fleet of superior force cruizing off that place, and another fleet of superior force at Spithead nearly ready to sail. Those fleets were under the command of Admirals of experienced ability, and of the highest character. They were manned and officered as all the British ships of war are now manned and officered ; it was not in the power of language to say more of them. Every intelligence had been forwarded to the commanders without the delay of a moment ; every discretionary instruction and power had been given to them ; every exertion had been used by them. The result certainly had not been successful. He would not, however, quarrel with the elements, to which alone the disappointment was attributed ; but would rather look to the fair and obvious topics of consolation. Our fleets, at least, had sustained neither loss nor damage. The enemy had lost two ships of the line, several frigates, a fourth part in the number of vessels of the whole expedition, with the farther loss of 4 or 5000 men. They had greatly damaged the remaining part of their force, and had incurred an enormous expence to no purpose. It was another just ground of consolation, that the people of the South of Ireland had, on this occasion, shewn a loyalty, a zeal, and a courage above all praise.

Lord Auckland regretted that he felt himself obliged to differ from a noble friend (Lord Carlisle), who had expressed himself with force and eloquence, and had thought proper to state our naval position, in the instance now debated, as humiliating,

liating, when compared to the circumstances of the last war. It was painful to bring to recollection an epoch of mortification to this country. But was it possible for the noble Earl to have forgotten that, in 1779, thirty ships of the line, all that we could then assemble, were driven up the Channel by sixty ships of the enemy. It was a proud contrast to that period, to reflect that, on the late occasion, we had two fleets at hand, each of which was avowedly superior to the largest force that the enemy could bring forward. A noble Marquis (Lord Abercorn) had on the present occasion adverted to the calamities of the war; but surely those calamities ought to be put out of view in discussing the conduct and exploits of our navy. Through the whole course of the war that navy had exhibited an uninterrupted series of the most brilliant and most solid successes. Great conquests had been made; the commerce of the enemy had been annihilated; the naval force of the enemy had been utterly broken and reduced; 35 ships of the line and 75 frigates had been taken; our Parliamentary journals had been crowded every session with the thanks of Parliament to the Admirals, officers, and seamen. Above all, the naval character of the country, high as it had been before, had been raised to an elevation far beyond example or precedent in any history of any nation.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, that having repeatedly in the course of the present war (which every one of their Lordships, he believed, would agree with him in asserting to have been most calamitous, and which he should pronounce to have been unjust and unnecessary, an opinion in which all the House, perhaps, were not so likely to agree with him), gone over all the topics of error and mismanagement connected with the conduct of the war, he should not then deem it necessary to allude to them that day. Declining, therefore, to enter into any of the arguments which he had frequently urged for enquiry, as also into the constant answer he had received when any enquiry was moved for; he should content himself with observing, that they had all seen and felt the effect of what had lately happened, and what the situation of this country was at this moment. If a consideration of these circumstances did not press upon their Lordships, and convince them of the necessity of an enquiry, it would be useless for any man to say any thing upon the subject, for it must be out of the power of any eloquence that ever was possessed by man to effect it. Yet, though he meant to abstain from following the same line of argument which he had pursued upon former occasions, he still could not refrain from addressing a few words to those noble

ble Lords who had been in the habit of prevailing so often upon the judgment of the House. He would put it to them, whether they would refuse to institute an enquiry? And, indeed, some sort of enquiry they felt to be necessary; for no sooner had the subject been mentioned in the House, than the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty was ready to produce the papers that had been laid upon the table. That they had been garbled he would not say; but, at least he would contend, that they had been, for the purpose of conveying any information, very badly selected. He was ready, in the fullest manner, to acknowledge the talents, skill, and courage of Lord Bridport, Adm. Elphinstone, and others, for he was far from meaning to insinuate that they had not done their duty, or that they would not on all occasions do so when they had the opportunity; but he must maintain, that his Majesty's Ministers had neglected their's in the event that had happened, in illustrating which point his Lordship referred to dates and circumstances as they appeared on the table; and he hoped he should never have another instance in which Ireland shall appear to be neglected by a British fleet. He could find in those papers no good reason for Admiral Colpoys being kept so long at sea. He asserted it to be the belief of all, that the preparations at Brest were destined against Ireland; yet no measures had been taken against these preparations till December, except the sending out of Admiral Colpoys. With respect to the real destination of the Brest fleet, the Ministers were, he believed, the only persons who entertained any doubts. Ireland obviously ought to have been the first point of defence. Ireland, however, had not been protected, and he hoped that it would be the last time she would be left in such a situation. He proceeded to observe on that part of the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty, which stated, that he would resign when a man was found who would undertake to contend against the elements, govern the winds and waves, the tides and the seasons. If the country was not to lose the benefit of his services until that period, they would, he believed, long enjoy it. The noble Lord had said, that this was a time when a great deal of eagerness was manifest in this country. If he thought there was a great deal of eagerness for peace in this country, he believed the noble Earl was well informed. But if he thought there was any eagerness in any party to succeed the present Administration, he owned he was unacquainted with any such eagerness. Who, after what had happened to this country, would wish to share in the toils and troubles of managing its public affairs? Who, that could escape, could wish to enter into such difficulty? He was
not

not acquainted with any man whose ambition approached so near to madness, or rather, who possessed so much foolish vanity, so much preposterous self-opinion and conceit, as to wish to succeed the Ministers who had brought their country to ruin. Who would wish to take upon himself to recal the credit of the Bank of England? Who was the man who was ambitious of the trouble of repairing the broken finances of this country? Who would wish to be responsible for the restoration of all the losses we had sustained in St. Domingo? He who would wish to be responsible for the restoration of every sixpence that had been expended upon Holland? Every sixpence that had been sent to Vienna? Every shilling that had been expended upon the Netherlands? Who would wish to undertake to indemnify this country for all the treasure that had been expended upon Corsica? Was there a reflecting man alive who did not curse the day on which British money was lavished on objects that so little answered any purpose connected with British interests? If there did exist such a man in this country, he owned he was unacquainted with him, and therefore he verily believed the noble Earl might be perfectly at ease about any eagerness that any man in his senses wished to succeed him. His Lordship concluded with observing, that the papers on the table by no means amounted to a satisfactory justification of Ministers, and that unless their Lordships felt the propriety of this enquiry themselves from the face of those papers and the speech of the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty, nothing that could be said upon the subject could have any effect upon their Lordships' minds.

The Earl of *Scarborough* said, though he had uniformly supported the measures of Ministers, he should certainly vote for an enquiry, because he flattered himself the issue of it would be a full justification of Ministers. His Lordship quoted an expression of Sir George Savile, "that to vote for an enquiry into the causes of disaster was not to vote censure." The present occasion demanded enquiry. Every thing had been sacrificed to blind confidence; unless the legislature at this critical moment resumed their constitutional independence, he saw but little hope of the restoration of the prosperous situation of the country.

Lord *Grenville* said, he had listened with a considerable degree of astonishment to the mode in which noble Lords had supported this motion, and more than once he really was in doubt whether they were not wholly mistaken in
in

the facts upon which they were to decide. An attempt had been made to separate the feelings of Ministers, as if they had not all an equal share in this transaction; for his own part he was ready to acknowledge his share in the transaction, and in the responsibility, if either the noble Earl at the head of the Admiralty, or the Board of Admiralty, were chargeable with criminality, he desired to claim his share of that criminality, he was equally criminal, and so was every one of his Majesty's cabinet. They could not, however, be answerable for things which were not in their power. Whenever any expedition failed, the whole blame was usually thrown upon Ministers, without stopping to ascertain whether they were in fact guilty. It was most unreasonably supposed that they could at pleasure command the wind and waves, and send a fleet up and down the channel at a moment's warning. To form any conjecture as to the facts of this transaction from what had fallen during the debate, would be a difficult, if not an impracticable task, nor could he have conceived that it could possibly be argued in the manner in which it has been argued. It had been represented as a national disgrace, instead of which, whatever disgrace, whatever loss, and whatever failure there was, it was on the side of the enemy, who had lost four of their ships, and near five thousand men in this wild attempt. It might have been supposed from the manner in which some noble lords had spoken, that this was a complete triumph of the French fleet over ours; whereas, in fact, their only boast was, that they had on a single occasion, and that in the longest and darkest nights of the darkest month in the whole year, had the good fortune, through the cover of impenetrable fogs, to succeed in escaping the vigilance of the British fleet. This was not a boast that the French would formerly have made; they would have considered it as a disgrace. Undoubtedly they had succeeded in escaping our fleet, but it was in consequence of events which it was impossible to foresee or prevent; nor was it as was imagined, so easy with a superior force to prevent an inferior force from failing, unperceived at such a season, when the nights were longest and the atmosphere most clouded and hazy. Movements at sea could not be made with the exactness, the certainty, and the celerity they are on land. In the warmth of argument, noble Lords, certainly unintentionally, had complimented Ministers: when they exclaimed, "You have not been able to catch this miserable wreck and remnant of the French fleet." Who made it a

wreck

wreck and remnant? Was it not effected during the present war, and by the present Administration? In no former war had this country been able to keep two fleets in the channel equal to that of the French? and yet in this war, two had constantly been maintained, one ready for sailing, and the other blocking up Brest.

Much argument had arisen from confounding the relative interests of this country with Portugal and Ireland, and strong insinuations had been thrown out in the debate, as if Ministers had considered the safety of Portugal as equal to that of Ireland. The noble Earl (Lord Carlisle) who spoke in the debate immediately after his noble friend near him (Earl Spencer), had said that with regard to the interests of the two kingdoms, no sea rolled between England and Ireland. Certainly in the view of their political interests no sea rolled between them, but in the consideration of the present subject, it was absolutely necessary to keep in mind that a sea did roll between the two kingdoms, and that much of the argument in the discussion before them necessarily turned on that circumstance. No man in his senses could for a moment contend that if Ireland and Portugal were equally in danger of an attack from the common enemy, Government ought to entertain a doubt to which immediate protection ought to be afforded, but where it was uncertain against which the enemy meditated an attack, it was absurd to say that Ministers were not bound in duty to watch over the safety of each, till it was ascertained which stood in most immediate need of protection. Portugal, from her firm attachment to this country, from her unexampled firmness and zeal in our cause, deserved every service that this country could yield her, independent of leaving unguarded our more immediate and more domestic interests. The insinuations therefore were as unreasonable as they were inapplicable and unjust. It was true that no such charge had been directly made; indeed it carried too much absurdity on the face of it, to be gravely stated in that House. If noble Lords supposed, that because our fleet was superior, the enemy could not get to the coast of Ireland; he would refer them to two memorable instances; in 1689, the French landed in Ireland, notwithstanding Lord Torrington was at sea with a formidable fleet, for the express purpose of preventing them; in the succeeding year the same attempt was made, and successfully made, though Admiral Russell did every thing in his power to prevent it. His Lordship said, of course the
defence

defence of Ireland, as well as of England, must rest in a great measure upon the operations of our fleet; but Ireland was not by any means in such a state of internal weakness and defenceless condition as to render such an invasion at all alarming.

It was evident that the French had been deluded about the political sentiments of the inhabitants of Ireland, and had flattered themselves with the most sanguine hopes of being joined by great numbers of the inhabitants of that kingdom, the event shewed how much they were mistaken. This was a convincing argument in answer to those who declaimed upon the discontents in Ireland, and would, he hoped, be recollected in all future discussions upon that subject.

From the style of argument pursued by those who supported the question, his Lordship said, it seemed as if the numerous glorious exploits of the navy during the war, had totally escaped the recollection of those noble Lords, who contended for an enquiry. All their Lordships surely could not have forgotten the different instances in which the naval undertakings of the French had been defeated. The shameful and cowardly conduct of Richery, blocked up in Toulon for six months, and his conduct after he left Toulon, and the manner in which he avoided the British squadron, till strengthened by the accession of a Spanish fleet; the event of the 1st of June, one of the most memorable in the history of nautical affairs; and the late decisive victory, were evidence of that superiority on which the defence of the country so particularly depended. Whatever we might feel for the miscarriage of the undertaking of our allies on the Continent, in our naval attempts there was nothing but triumph. Nor did he regret one single shilling that had been sent to the Continent. The Emperor had done us most essential service; instead of wishing that a guinea less had been sent to Vienna, or expended in the Netherlands, or the West-Indies; the only alternative which had been left the British, in the West-Indies, being, either to carry offensive war into the enemy's colonies, or to have offensive war introduced into the British colonies, his opinion was that if it had been convenient to the country to have been more liberal of expenditure in those objects, its most essential interests would probably have been still further promoted and peace accelerated.

The Marquis of *Lawnfdown* said, that it was with reluctance

ance he rose at so late an hour, but he deemed an enquiry, such as that the motion went to, most indispensably necessary, nay, so prepossessed was he of the necessity of an enquiry, that he could not help urging once more some of those consequences that would result from a refusal to enquire. What he had before referred to as stated by the Commissioners of Accounts, shewed how absolutely necessary enquiry was, with a view to æconomical retrenchment in every office; with a view to alteration, censure and reform. With regard to the particular subject before the House, the necessity of enquiry was so obvious, so urgent, that it required but little from him in addition to what had been already said, to prove it beyond the possibility of contradiction. Every noble Lord must feel a conviction, that had the fleet sent against Ireland been captured, the whole country would have been in perfect security against an invasion. That being the case, was there a man who would say, that it was not proper to know whether, and where blame was imputable, or not? In Ireland it had been a prejudice to represent the government of this country as careless of the sister kingdom. At present a new discontent had arisen, and gentlemen who were in the habit of corresponding with Ireland knew very well, that they who had formerly taken the part of the government, and been the most ready to assert that the motives of Ministers respecting Ireland, were motives of kindness and protection to that country, were now forced to change their tone, and acknowledge that Ireland had been neglected. Applications had been made from thence for protection, and it must be confessed that that country had been abandoned by England. Ministers had pledged themselves to keep up a great land force in Ireland, which they had withdrawn. In the last war, a pledge had been made, that a naval force should, in all future wars, be kept off the Irish coast; and were he Minister now, he should think it necessary to station a fleet in the Cove of Cork, and another off Milford-Haven immediately. With regard to the expediency and necessity of an enquiry, it could not but be satisfactory in every point of view; satisfactory to Admiral Colpoys, to Lord Bridport, and also to the profession. There were, besides, other persons concerned in the enquiry—the Admiralty, the Navy, the Victualling, and other inferior Boards. It would not impede, but accelerate operations, and ought to take place. The people of this country and the people of Ireland equally required it. Ministers, indeed, had shewn some conscientiousness

ness of the necessity of a mock enquiry at least, by their producing papers; the first thing to be remarked on these papers, was the notorious want of intelligence. The noble Earl had said that there was such a mass of intelligence before the Admiralty, that they knew not which to credit, and which not. That too much was as bad as too little. Did the noble Lord never hear of political sagacity, which enabled Ministers to discern what they ought to trust, and what not? Sagacity was the thing lamentably wanted at present. The noble Earl had said he would resign when he could find a person daring enough to contend against the winds. What the public wanted was, not a man who could govern against the winds and waves, but who would govern with the winds; and this was the case in the present instance. The wind had been favourable, and all that had been wanting was an Admiralty capable of making use of it.

On the 16th of December, admiral Colpoys received intelligence of the French, the wind continued fair, and if he had had proper orders, he would have been off the Irish coast. Had the ships under Lord Bridport been ready, the wind would still have been fair. The noble Earl had talked of long nights, was it so great a reach of foresight, to know that there were long nights in December? But the French fleet, it seemed, might have gone up the Channel. In the first place, the wind was against them; but if they had, what would have been the case? they would have been under lock and key. The remainder of the subject lay in a very small compass. It turned upon two points. Why were not orders given to admiral Colpoys to go off Cape Clear? and why were not more ships kept ready at Portsmouth? It was impossible for Ministers to get over these two points. His Lordship said, that he had read in a review the other day a dissertation upon a drill-plough. A clergyman said, "What stuff men will take in, when it is their interest to believe it." But this stuff would not go down now, for it was not the interest of the country to believe it. The subject lay to-day between the House and the Ministers; to-morrow or a few days hence it would lie between Ministers and the public, who would not fail to see that gross neglect and inability were imputable to the Admiralty. The Marquis said, enquiries of a large nature and on a broad scale were absolutely necessary; nor had this been the only point in which great inattention had been shewn. Able and meritorious officers

were left unemployed ; even Sir John Jervis to whom the country was so much indebted, had not been called into service till the fourth year of the war, and then reluctantly ; whereas he and another officer, who always occurred to his recollection, when he thought of Sir John Jervis, were equal to any enterprize that depended on extraordinary gallantry, extraordinary exertion, and extraordinary skill. He concluded with declaring that he should vote decidedly for the motion.

Lord *Hy* (Earl of *Kinnoul*) said, he had been glad to hear a noble Earl, who had spoken early in the debate (Earl of *Carlisle*) make a retraction of the word which in the heat of debate he had applied to the papers a few nights since when the subject was first mentioned. That retraction entirely did away the impression, and surely every noble Lord, who considerately examined the papers on the table, must allow that they did not deserve the imputation of being garbled ; for his own part they appeared to him perfectly satisfactory, and afforded his mind full conviction, that although it was much to be lamented, that the French fleet, which dared to insult the coast of Ireland, had escaped both the Squadron under admiral Colpoys, and that under Lord Bridport, no blame was imputable either to the Board of Admiralty, or his Majesty's Ministers. He said he would not go at large into the subject as it had already been so much discussed, and possibly had not the papers been produced, he should have voted the enquiry, but with the complete information that the papers afforded he should give his negative to the motion.

Earl *Fitzwilliam* said, that, without personal hostility to the first Lord of the Admiralty, he must vote for enquiry. The conduct of our marine, as to its great operations, belonged equally to all the Cabinet. There had been blame, and there ought to be enquiry. The public here, and the public in Ireland would not be satisfied without it. Some expressions which had been thrown out by noble Lords in situations of great authority, of more care being required for England than Ireland, would make a deep impression on the minds of the people of that country ; and he was sorry to have heard them.

Earl *Spencer* explained, he said that he had asserted, that to give general orders to Admiral Colpoys to sail for Ireland would have been wrong, as the French might have got between him and the British coast, and surely our own coast,

our

our arsenals, magazines of stores, &c. were objects of the highest importance. He reminded the noble Marquis that Sir John Jervis had been employed in the first year of the war and ever since.

Lord *Grenville* rose to state that Sir Charles Grey had also been employed with Sir John Jervis in the West-Indies, and that they were both called into service without the smallest reluctance. His Lordship supported what Earl Spencer had said in respect to the infinite importance of protecting our own coasts as well as those of Ireland.

Lord *Guilford* and Lord *Landstown* said, the words certainly implied greater care of England than of Ireland.

The question was then put :

<i>Non-Contents</i>	—	—	74
<i>Contents</i>	—	—	14
<i>Proxy</i>	—	—	1

Adjourned at one o'clock in the morning.

List of the Minority in the Lords on Lord ALBERMARLE'S Motion for an enquiry into the conduct of the Navy.

Dukes of Bedford,	Earl of Albemarle,
Norfolk,	Carlisle,
Marquisses of Lansdown,	Scarborough,
Abercorne,	Lords Say and Sele,
Earls of Suffolk,	King,
Fitzwilliam,	Holland,
Guildford,	Rawdon, (Earl Moira)

PROXY.

Earl Derby.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *March 16.*

This being a day on which a ballot was to have taken place, which requires the presence of 100 members, and only ninety-five appearing at four o'clock, an adjournment took place of course.

FRIDAY, *March 17.*

Mr. *Mainwaring* moved for leave to bring in a bill to erect the Corporation of Surgeons into a College.—Leave given.

The usual number of members were chosen by ballot to form

form a Committee for the trial of the merits of the Inverkeithing election.

The Committee on the report of the Select Committee appointed to enquire into the best mode of promulgating the statutes, was, on the motion of Mr. Abbot deferred to Monday next.

Mr. *Long* brought up some public accounts, which were ordered to lie on the table.

STOPPAGE OF THE BANK.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that as he supposed there would be no objection to the second reading of the bill for confirming the Order in Council, and indemnifying the Bank for acting upon it, since those who had agreed that the bill should be brought in, would not oppose its going through this stage, he should propose that the order of the preceding day should stand for that day, and that the bill should be committed on Monday. If, contrary to his expectations, however, gentlemen were not disposed to defer the debate till it was in a Committee, he should move that the second reading be deferred till Monday.

Mr. *Fox* declared he wished to say a few words. The same reasons which induced him to agree to the bill being brought in would influence him not to oppose the second reading. He had a few remarks, however, to make, not upon what the bill actually contained, but upon what it did not contain. There seemed to be no provision in the bill obliging government to receive notes in payment of the taxes, which was one part of the plan, at least as it had been stated by the honourable gentleman in debate. He wished also that it should be known how far it was to operate upon the intercourse between individuals. It was certainly extremely desirable it should not operate upon them at all. The House must observe, however, the alarming situation in which every man in England was placed. There was scarcely any person, with whatever accuracy his accounts might be kept, and whatever balance there might be in his favour, who did not owe something. How then did he stand by the existing laws? If he could not pay his debts in cash, he was liable to be sued and arrested at the will of his creditor, at present there existing no possibility of procuring a supply of specie; so that every man would lie at the mercy of every creditor of every description. This situation was
certainly

certainly alarming, and it might be particularly hard upon bankers, who were at the mercy of all their customers, yet if it was tolerable it was undoubtedly better that the inconveniencies should be suffered, than that a remedy should be applied. Were the only remedy to which they could have recourse resorted to, he was convinced that the evils attending it would be much more ruinous and destructive. He threw out this observation not with a view of making any proposition, but merely that the House might know the situation in which the country would be placed when the present bill was passed into a law. There was one blank in the bill which it was of great importance to fill up with judgment, namely, the period during which the bill was to last. He hoped only that it would be a very short one indeed. He suggested, that as it seemed to be the opinion of the House on a former day that the quantity of floating debt due from Government to the Bank ought to be lessened, a clause should be introduced into the present bill to limit the advances of the Bank to Government during the period of its operation. He wished also to know, whether, when they were going this length on paper credit, it was not intended to impose some limits (what limits was another question) to the issue of Bank paper during the period of this bill? He said this much at present not with a view to propose any measure, nor even as a notice of a positive intention to propose any, but merely for the purpose of calling the attention of the House to a subject connected with the most important interests of the country.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that as the topics on which the honourable gentleman had touched, could not be regularly discussed at present, and as some of them, perhaps, could not be entered into even in the Committee, he should barely move that the bill be now read a second time.

Sir *John Sinclair* doubted much the propriety of reading the bill a second time on that day. The bill related to the public and the Bank. With a view to the public, there was no necessity for hurrying it through this stage; and as it regarded the Bank he was decidedly of opinion that the second reading should be postponed, as it had not yet, he understood, come under the consideration of the Directors, who might be inclined, perhaps, to call a meeting of the proprietors of Bank stock to take their opinion respecting it. He took this opportunity of notifying his determination to object to that
part

part of the bill which went to indemnify the Bank till the public were in possession of the reasons which influenced the conduct of the Directors, for he never would admit the idea, and he hoped it would never be sanctioned by the Legislature, that the Privy Council was to be erected into a Board of Controul on that Corporation.

Mr. *Hobhouse* objected to the whole bill as an act of robbery and depredation against the public creditor. He should therefore oppose it throughout, lest the plunderer, passing in this instance with impunity, should proceed in his system of pillage. The Bank of England was the great wheel of public credit that kept it in motion, the life of our domestic trade, and the soul of foreign commerce, and rather than destroy this vital principle of the body politic, there was no measure which ought not to be adopted. He was afraid that Ministers, by issuing the Order in Council, had taken a step which they would never be able to retrieve; when the bill expired, let the period of its duration be extended as long as it might, the people would rush in a body to the Bank, and demand specie for their notes, resolved never again to be the victims of that delusion to which they had once fallen a prey. The least wound given to public credit could never be healed; public confidence, when once lost, could never be effectually restored.—The Bank was once thought to rest on a foundation indisputably secure, it once had stood upon the highest pinnacle, reputation, but he was afraid that it would never more recover that enviable height. He concluded with opposing the second reading of the bill.

Mr. *Bryan Edwards* said, the House was now placed in this predicament, by the motion for the second reading of the bill, either that this stage of the bill should be postponed, that the Order in Council should be repealed, which would occasion a run upon the Bank, or that the House should sanction an order of this nature, before they were acquainted with the grounds upon which it was issued, which certainly would be in the highest degree unparliamentary. He was of opinion that the second reading of the bill should be put off till the report of the Secret Committee was before the House.

Lord *Hawkebury* begged leave to remind the honourable gentleman and the House, that the Committee alluded to had been first appointed to enquire into the necessity of continuing and confirming that Order of Council. The Committee

mittee had, accordingly, made that enquiry, and reported to the House, that the Order of Council ought to be confirmed and continued, in consequence of which the present Bill was ordered; and since that another enquiry had been referred to that Committee, to know whether the Privy Council were justified, at the time, for its restriction, which was a separate consideration to that of its continuance. But certainly the House might, with the greatest propriety, permit the Bill to be read a second time, as the opinion delivered in the report of the former Committee was, that the operation of the Order in Council ought to be continued, which undoubtedly could be best carried into effect under the authority of an act of Parliament.

Mr. Grey said, that the opinion of that Committee of the necessity for continuing the operation of the Order in Council was founded upon the Order having been issued. Whether there was any necessity for issuing the Order was another question; but now that a necessity for continuing it was found to exist, he should vote for the second reading of the Bill. But, what he rose chiefly for, was, to state to the House some alarming information contained in a paper presented that day by Mr. Long, in consequence of a motion which was made by an honourable friend of his on a former day. Another honourable friend of his (Mr. Sheridan) some time ago moved, that Ministers, in the present state of the country, ought to be prohibited from sending any further sums to the Emperor. The answer of the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to his honourable friend did not preclude him from issuing any part of the 500,000*l.* which was put at his discretion by a vote of credit granted to him by Parliament before Christmas. He reminded the House, however, at what time this sum was voted: it was before Christmas, long before those calamities which had now overtaken us, long before the House of Commons knew that the Bank had stopped payment, and that the credit of the country was wounded in its most vital part. Had the House at that time conceived that the calamities, which were about to befall them, were on the eve of approaching; had they been aware of the dangers with which they were threatened, he was convinced that they would not have given their assent to the measure of sending more money out of the country. When this danger was realized, and when we were beset by a crowd of unexpected disasters, he did expect that Ministers would have exercised the discretion vested in them for the relief, and not for the further oppression, of the public. What was his surprise then, when on looking into the accounts which were that day presented, to find that,

as late as Saturday last, a sum of 120,000*l.* was issued in Exchequer bills, to be paid in specie by the Bank, to the agents of his Imperial Majesty! He hoped that the House would now impose some restrictions upon those Ministers, who became more desperate in proportion as the desperation of public affairs increased, to prohibit them at this time from sending more money out of the country. He had heard also that these Exchequer bills were at from 2 1-half to 3 per cent. discount, a circumstance for which they could not account, as they were payable by the Bank, on account of the Paymasters of the Forces.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that as none of the honourable Gentleman's observations were made in opposition to the second reading of the Bill, it was not incumbent upon him, or at all necessary, to say any thing in support of the motion. But to the other matters which had fallen from the honourable Gentleman he held himself bound to reply. It had been truly said by the honourable Gentleman, that nothing which had passed in the House since the Order of Council for prohibiting payment at the Bank had at all forbidden an advance to the Emperor; yet if there had, the payment stated by the honourable Gentleman could not have come under such prohibition. All that had been done was in consequence of the grant made by the House for 500,000*l.* And surely the House would not rescind or contradict its own grants. The fact was, these Exchequer bills were issued in payment of bills, which, in conformity to the grant of the House, had been drawn abroad; and nothing but the physical impossibility of doing it could justify refusing to pay what had been accepted.

As to the honourable Gentleman's assumption that the advance issued to the Emperor could be paid in no way but in cash, it was not warranted either by argument or fact. Unquestionably it might be remitted in other ways, without any cash whatever. The Exchequer bills were given to disburse the payment of bills which had been accepted here, and were not to be paid in cash. That this was a subject on which the fullest discussion might be demanded, he was not at all disposed to dispute, and he was ready to meet gentlemen on that ground whenever they should think proper to call upon him.

Mr. *Tierney* said, he was the person who brought this subject forward, having moved for the paper which explained it, as far as it was explained. He wished that the Minister had explained this matter further, as it regarded public credit, at this time, essentially. He could have wished that the Minister had begun as tender of the credit of the Bank of England as
he

he seemed to be of that of Government towards the Emperor. He understood that these Exchequer bills had been issued from the Exchequer on the Bank, and that the agent of the Emperor had sold them at a discount of about three and a half per cent. He wanted to know, whether this loss was to fall upon his Imperial Majesty, or upon us? If upon the Emperor, there was an end of the Minister's delicacy with regard to the faith to be kept with his Imperial Majesty. If upon this country, the House ought to know it without delay. What he wanted now to be informed of particularly was, how it came to pass, that bills drawn by the Exchequer on the Bank, for the payment of the Emperor, should suffer a depreciation in the market on the moment of their being issued, as the case appeared to be, by the amount which was now before the House of the Exchequer bills that were issued on the 11th of this month? This appeared to him to be an alarming matter, and he should be glad to hear the Minister explain it. If not, he should have occasion to make a specific motion upon the subject hereafter.

The Bill was then read a second time, and ordered to be committed to a Committee of the whole House on Monday next.

TREASON AND SEDITIOUS MEETING BILLS.

Mr. *Fox* said, that he had given notice of a motion for the repeal of two Bills. He did not mean to bring that subject forward before the holidays. He now gave notice, that on Thursday he should make a motion respecting the state of Ireland.

Colonel *Porter* postponed his motion relative to the Petition of the Borough Electors to Monday se'nnight, as we understood.

Sir *John Sinclair* gave notice that he should on a future day bring forward a motion relative to a general Inclosure Bill.

CALL OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. *Curwen* observed, that there never was a period which so much demanded the full attendance of that House upon public affairs as the present, and therefore he moved that the House be called over on Monday fortnight.

Mr. *Pierrepoint* hoped, that if this motion was agreed to, it would be seriously followed up, and that it should not operate to keep members in town from day to day to no effectual purpose, as was the case before Christmas last.

The motion, that the House be called over on Monday fortnight, was then put and carried.

Mr. *Curwen* then said, that the present situation of this country required the serious attention of every member of the House. He expected much serious discussion upon the report of the Committee upon the subject of finance, and other matters. He thought it would also be incumbent on the House to take some step towards the attainment of peace. For these reasons he should never neglect any thing that should be in his power to enforce the order for the Call of the House. And to shew his determination, he should now begin with a motion, "That such members as do not attend on Monday fortnight, be taken into the custody of the Serjeant at Arms." Ordered.

SLAVE TRADE.

A conversation took place between Mr. *Wilberforce*, Sir *William Young*, Mr. *Fox*, and Colonel *Porter*, concerning Mr. *Wilberforce's* intended motion for an abolition of the Slave Trade.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he had intended to bring forward a motion for the abolition of the Slave Trade; but a notice having been given by an honourable Gentleman of a motion respecting that business, he, not knowing how far it might be connected with his own, was desirous to defer his till that was over, and expressed a wish that the honourable Gentleman were in his place, or that some of his friends would get up and say when he proposed to bring it forward, as Monday (the day he had appointed) was fixed for the Committee on the Indemnity Bill.

Sir *William Young* answered for his honourable friend (Mr. *Ellis*) that he would choose to defer his motion from Monday to Friday, as he could not wish to have it come on the same day the House was going into a Committee on such a Bill as that for continuing the restrictions of the Bank; and Colonel *Porter*, being willing to accommodate gentlemen as much as possible, deferred his motion on the Southwark Petition from Friday next to Monday se'nnight.

Mr. *Fox* then expressed the most anxious desire that Mr. *Wilberforce*, if he had the same views as always, would proceed, without consideration of any other member or motion, to the attainment of his object by himself.

Mr. *Wilberforce* then gave notice, that he should, if possible, bring forward his motion for an abolition of the Slave Trade some time before Easter.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not answered the question which he had put to him relative to the Exchequer bills which were lately issued. He
should

should therefore repeat the substance of it, to avoid further doubt of the course he was to pursue. "Was the Emperor, or was this country, to abide by the loss which was to be sustained in consequence of the discount upon the late Exchequer bills?"

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he could not be prepared to answer this question, at this moment, further than to say, that the issue from the Exchequer on the Bank was the issue of the Paymaster General. That these bills were to be paid to an individual, who was the agent of his Imperial Majesty. That they were for certain services performed, which Parliament had agreed should be paid for, and that individuals had agreed to take them at no greater discount than one quarter per cent. That he understood to be the nature of the subject.

The Bill for amending the Scotch Quota Bill was ordered to be re-committed on Monday.

Sir *W. Young* moved that the Committee on the London Wet Docks be revived. Ordered.

The other orders of the day were deferred.
Adjourned to Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *March 20.*

LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

The Earl of *Maira* said, that the subject of the Debtor and Creditor laws, upon which their Lordships had been summoned that day, had been repeatedly postponed on account of the absence of the Lord Chancellor. He now rose for the purpose of again, for the same reason, deferring his intended motion till Friday, but he could not think of consenting to any farther delay beyond that period. He regretted that, in some degree, it had been proper to postpone it to the present period, on account of a becoming deference to the opinion of certain noble and learned Lords, who, he imagined, would wish to take a part in the discussion, but who, from indisposition or other causes, had uniformly been absent from the House. He particularly regretted the situation and absence of the noble and learned Lord who so ably filled the woofsack. There was, however, a call and a duty imposed upon him superior to all such consideration, namely, the deplorable state of the laws in question, which loudly called for amendment. He therefore gave notice, that, without any reference to the situation of particular persons,

Mr. *Curwen* then said, that the present situation of this country required the serious attention of every member of the House. He expected much serious discussion upon the report of the Committee upon the subject of finance, and other matters. He thought it would also be incumbent on the House to take some step towards the attainment of peace. For these reasons he should never neglect any thing that should be in his power to enforce the order for the Call of the House. And to shew his determination, he should now begin with a motion, "That such members as do not attend on Monday fortnight, be taken into the custody of the Serjeant at Arms." Ordered.

SLAVE TRADE.

A conversation took place between Mr. *Wilberforce*, Sir *William Young*, Mr. *Fox*, and Colonel *Porter*, concerning Mr. *Wilberforce's* intended motion for an abolition of the Slave Trade.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he had intended to bring forward a motion for the abolition of the Slave Trade; but a notice having been given by an honourable Gentleman of a motion respecting that business, he, not knowing how far it might be connected with his own, was desirous to defer his till that was over, and expressed a wish that the honourable Gentleman were in his place, or that some of his friends would get up and say when he proposed to bring it forward, as Monday (the day he had appointed) was fixed for the Committee on the Indemnity Bill.

Sir *William Young* answered for his honourable friend (Mr. *Ellis*) that he would choose to defer his motion from Monday to Friday, as he could not wish to have it come on the same day the House was going into a Committee on such a Bill as that for continuing the restrictions of the Bank; and Colonel *Porter*, being willing to accommodate gentlemen as much as possible, deferred his motion on the Southwark Petition from Friday next to Monday se'nnight.

Mr. *Fox* then expressed the most anxious desire that Mr. *Wilberforce*, if he had the same views as always, would proceed, without consideration of any other member or motion, to the attainment of his object by himself.

Mr. *Wilberforce* then gave notice, that he should, if possible, bring forward his motion for an abolition of the Slave Trade some time before Easter.

Mr. *Tierney* observed, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not answered the question which he had put to him relative to the Exchequer bills which were lately issued. He should

should therefore repeat the substance of it, to avoid further doubt of the course he was to pursue. "Was the Emperor, or was this country, to abide by the loss which was to be sustained in consequence of the discount upon the late Exchequer bills?"

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he could not be prepared to answer this question, at this moment, further than to say, that the issue from the Exchequer on the Bank was the issue of the Paymaster General. That these bills were to be paid to an individual, who was the agent of his Imperial Majesty. That they were for certain services performed, which Parliament had agreed should be paid for, and that individuals had agreed to take them at no greater discount than one quarter per cent. That he understood to be the nature of the subject.

The Bill for amending the Scotch Quota Bill was ordered to be re-committed on Monday.

Sir *W. Young* moved that the Committee on the London Wet Docks be revived. Ordered.

The other orders of the day were deferred.

Adjourned to Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *March 20.*

LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

The Earl of *Moir* said, that the subject of the Debtor and Creditor laws, upon which their Lordships had been summoned that day, had been repeatedly postponed on account of the absence of the Lord Chancellor. He now rose for the purpose of again, for the same reason, deferring his intended motion till Friday, but he could not think of consenting to any farther delay beyond that period. He regretted that, in some degree, it had been proper to postpone it to the present period, on account of a becoming deference to the opinion of certain noble and learned Lords, who, he imagined, would wish to take a part in the discussion, but who, from indisposition or other causes, had uniformly been absent from the House. He particularly regretted the situation and absence of the noble and learned Lord who so ably filled the woolsack. There was, however, a call and a duty imposed upon him superior to all such consideration, namely, the deplorable state of the laws in question, which loudly called for amendment. He therefore gave notice, that, without any reference to the situation of particular persons,

persons, he would bring on his motion on Friday next; and he moved that their Lordships be summoned for that day.

Lord *Kenyon* said, that if it should be impossible for the Lord Chancellor to attend upon that day, he hoped that the noble Earl would consent to postpone his motion to some future day. A Bill of so much importance ought not to be carried through without mature deliberation; and as he was unwilling that the task should devolve entirely on himself, he was desirous that an opportunity should be given for receiving the assistance of the Lord Chancellor upon that discussion.

Earl *Moir*, in reply, called to their Lordships' recollection the pressing nature of the subject, and the many times he had already postponed the discussion, on account of the non-attendance of certain Peers. He said, that the noble Lord had misapprehended the nature of his motion. He only meant to move their Lordships to go into a Committee to consider the Debtor and Creditor laws. He conceived that there were many hardships and inconveniencies in these laws which ought to be remedied; but it was by no means his intention to hastily bring forward any Bill upon the subject. He only wished that it should, as soon as possible, be taken into consideration. He meant therefore certainly to bring forward his motion on Friday.

Lord *Kenyon* then put the question for summoning the House for Friday next, which was ordered accordingly.

TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL.

The Earl of *Moir* moved the reading of the order of the day for summoning their Lordships with respect to the third reading of this Bill; after which his Lordship moved, that, previous to the question for the third reading of the Bill being put, the evidence taken before the Committee, and printed for the use of the House, be read.

The same was accordingly read by the clerk, when

Earl *Moir* again rose, and, at some length, stated his disapprobation of the Bill; complaining of advantage having been taken of a quibble, and great management having been practised respecting it. He adverted to the process of the Bill through their Lordships' House; and he asserted that, with respect to certain stages of it, the standing order of the House relative to Canal Bills had been violated, and to all appearance intentionally. So much was he impressed with this idea, that he deemed it incumbent on him to move, "That the standing orders of the House, in the instance of the present Canal Bill, not having been complied with, the Bill be rejected."

This

This motion gave rise to a very long and desultory debate, or rather conversation, with respect to the standing orders of the House.

The Earls of *Moira*, *Coventry*, and *Kinnoul*, the Duke of *Bridgewater*, Lords *Auckland* and *Walsingham*, and the Bishop of *Rocheſter*, were the speakers.

The question being called for, a division took place on the question for the third reading of the Bill;

<i>Contents (in favour of the bill)</i>	40
<i>Non-Contents (against it)</i>	7
<i>Majority</i>	33

On the question of passing the Bill, Earl *Moira* stated some farther objections to it, but did not divide the House. It was passed accordingly.

Received several Bills from the Commons, and read those upon the table in their different stages.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *March 20.*

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* presented a Petition on behalf of the inhabitants of the Ward of Billingsgate against the London Wet Docks Bill. Referred to the Committee on the Bill.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* presented a similar Petition from the inhabitants of the Tower Ward. Referred in the same manner.

The Sheriffs of London presented at the bar of the House a Petition from the Lord Mayor and Commons of London, in Common Council assembled, against the same Bill. Referred in the like manner.

The Petition of the prisoners confined for debt in the Castle of Lancaster, stating that they had only 4d. a day to subsist upon, and that they are in danger of perishing for want of sustenance, was read, and then ordered to be referred to a Committee of the whole House on Wednesday next.

The Bill for regulating the trade and commercial intercourse between this country and America was read a third time, and passed.

The Bill for increasing the rate of subsistence to be given to inn-keepers, who shall have soldiers quartered upon them, was read a second time, and ordered to a Committee of the whole House the next day.

Mr.

Mr. *Rose* brought up a Bill for the erecting the corporations of surgeons in London into a College.

Read a first time, and ordered to be read a second.

MINUTE OF COUNCIL RESPECTING THE BANK.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that a very important business was intended to have been brought forward before the House by him that day.—He meant the Bill relative to the Bank ; but there occurred a difficulty upon the matter. He could have wished that the Bill should have been submitted to the Committee that day. It was proper he should state to the House that he had an opportunity of conversing that morning with a very respectable and important class of persons upon this subject, whose opinions ought to be duly considered upon it, he meant the bankers of London. They had suggested to him some circumstances which, in his opinion, would be material for the consideration of the House. These circumstances, however, were of such a nature as to render it necessary that they should hold a meeting among themselves. It was also necessary they should have an opportunity of holding such a meeting before the House went into a Committee upon the Bill. This meeting, he apprehended, they would hold the next day. Perhaps the result of that meeting might be such as would be argued upon the report as well as in the Committee. He understood the gentlemen who attended him that day, to have expected from that conference, that the Bill would be submitted to a Committee that day, but he had conversed with some of these gentlemen since he had come into the House, and he now understood from them that they expected that the Bill would not be submitted to the Committee that day. There were many persons who seemed to have conceived that the Committee was to be put off altogether. He had reason to believe that such an opinion had been formed by some of the gentlemen who had been with him that morning. Others had certainly understood him otherwise. But as many of these gentlemen had just informed him that they understood the Committee upon the Bill was to be put off, he thought it would not be proper to go that day into so important a measure as this, as so many gentlemen had this understanding of it, many members might have gone away under that apprehension, and many of them materially interested in the subject, and whose opinions the House might wish to hear. Under these circumstances it
appeared

appeared to him necessary that the House should not go into the Committee that day, as he had intended. He should therefore move, "That the Order of the day upon the subject should be deferred to Wednesday." He wished those gentlemen to hold their meeting in the interim. He hoped that the business would not be delayed too long, and if it could not come on on Wednesday, there would not be any objection to take it on Thursday. He then moved, "That the Order of the day upon the Bank Bill be read;" which being done, he moved, "That the House do resolve itself into the said Committee on Wednesday next."

Sir *John Sinclair* said, he was almost certain from the commencement of this measure, that a matter of this importance could not be brought before a Committee of the House, previous to a meeting having been held of the Bank proprietors. He suggested that opinion to the House on a former day; he had not altered his opinion upon that point; on the contrary, every thing that had happened since, had tended to confirm it; a Bill of such immense importance as this should not be pushed forward in haste. The Bank proprietors ought certainly to have an opportunity of meeting before the Bill in question should be submitted to a Committee. He understood that such a meeting was to be held on Thursday. He had heard so from an honourable member of the House.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* said a few words.

Mr. *Dent* was of opinion that the Committee upon the Bill ought to be deferred until after the Committee had made their report upon the finances of the nation. He wished to know, whether it was intended that the public should guarantee the payment of demands upon the Bank.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* thought that questions of that kind could be better discussed in a Committee than in any other shape.

The question for deferring the Committee to Wednesday was then put and carried.

On the report of the Committee on the Militia pay Bill,

Mr. *Bastard* proposed an amendment, to which Mr. *Steele* assented: and it was adopted.

Mr. *Bastard* proposed another, which Mr. *Steele* opposed.

The House divided—

Ayes, (For the Amendment)	—	36
Noes, (Against it)	—	58

Majority

22

BILL FOR BETTER PROMULGATING OF THE STATUTES.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of the report of the Select Committee appointed to consider of the best mode of promulgating the Statutes, Mr. Douglas in the chair.

Mr. *Abbot* opened the general nature of the business in a speech of considerable length; in the course of which he stated that he did not intend to propose that a copy of every public statute should be sent to every person in the kingdom who held a commission of the peace, but he should propose that a proportional allotment should be sent to the justices who sat at various places where the quarter sessions were held, to be there distributed according to the circumstances of the business to which they referred, and among those who took the most active and laborious parts in the duty of Magistrates. He then stated the whole of the plan which he had to submit to the Committee, the substance of which will be found in the resolutions which he afterwards moved.

There was one point which he said he had submitted to men of much greater experience than himself in Parliamentary proceedings, and which, with great reluctance, he had been obliged to give up. He meant an alteration in Parliamentary diction, for of all the specimens we had of the English language, Parliamentary diction was the most perplexed. The operative sentence, or that for which a clause was introduced into a Bill, was often hidden in a wilderness of words, which never added to, but often so confounded the sense as to render the whole clause totally unintelligible, so that the intention of the legislature was thus often entirely lost. Indeed, the legal terms of our jurisprudence were liable to this objection, and it was very grievous, inasmuch as it was often productive of endless confusion. He therefore sincerely wished that at some future period this subject might be taken up. We might derive much advantage in this particular by examining the proceedings of others. The legislative and judicial proceedings of the congress and states of America, although, like all human institutions, they were imperfect, yet they certainly came much nearer to the point of perfection, in clearness of language, than our own. If we were to take them for a model, perhaps it might be well. If the executive Government whose duty it was from time to time to attend to these points in the Bills which they had occasion to introduce, were

were to try the effect of some alteration in the language of statutes, he was persuaded it would soon be productive of great national advantage. He looked forward to this as a source of great national improvement.

He then proceeded to move certain resolutions, of which the following are the substance :—

First, That it is the opinion of this Committee, it is expedient, for the better promulgation of the law, that his Majesty's printer, instead of printing and distributing 1126 copies of the public statutes of the realm, as now printed at his Majesty's expence, that the said printer be directed to print and distribute 3550 copies of every public and general statute, and 200 of every public local statute, and 200 of every private statute, without any additional expence to the public.

Secondly, That the said printer be directed to print and deliver, or transmit by post, the said Bills as soon as possible to certain Magistrates, &c. after the said Bills shall have received the royal assent, according to the same mode as is now observed for the distribution of general acts at the end of a session of Parliament.

Thirdly, That the printer shall deliver 200 copies of the public, local, and 200 copies of private acts, in like manner.

Fourthly, That every chief Magistrate, or head officer of every town corporate, &c. in England and Scotland, receiving such copies, shall preserve and transmit the same to his successor in office.

Fifthly, That in order not to charge the public with the expence, the parties interested shall pay the expence thereof.

Sixthly, That the printer shall print general statutes under their general heads and general clauses under their general heads, together with a general table of the heads of them, according to directions, &c.

Seventhly, That the precise duration of every new or temporary Bill be printed at the head of the Bill, and at the end thereof, and no where else.

Eighthly, That the revival of expired statutes, or of all those intended to be revived, shall be included in one Bill; that the title shall express the cause of reviving such statutes, and shall describe such statutes, together with the precise duration of their continuance.

All these resolutions were carried, the report received immediately, and ordered to be taken into consideration this day se'nnight, and to be printed.

The Scotch Bank note Bill was ordered to be read a third time the next day, if then engrossed.

As also the Bill for amending the Scotch Quota Bill.

The other Orders of the day were deferred to Wednesday.
Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, *March 21.*

STATE OF IRELAND.

The order of the day for the House to be summoned, being moved and read,

The Earl of *Moir* rose to make his promised motion with regard to Ireland. He said that on ordinary occasions where two separate and independent Legislatures existed, acting each within its own sphere for the happiness of two countries united under one common head or sovereign, and identified by a common interest, it certainly was of the utmost importance for them mutually to respect the line by which their authority was bounded. They ought to be careful not to approach the line of demarcation, and to employ the utmost delicacy in agitating questions in which the privileges and the independence of each other was involved. Although this general truth could not be disputed, circumstances might occur in which, consistently with the most perfect regard to the independent rights and separate authorities, it might be proper and fit, nay, even meritorious for them mutually to manifest their attention and their anxiety for objects in which their common interests were concerned. The delicacy with which this species of interference is conducted, affords an assurance of the purity of the motive. It effectually guards against the irritating suspicion of usurpations which awaken jealousies and kindle resentments. Free from every appearance of an affected superiority and overbearing dominion, such an interference for common interest would be received with kindness and attended with advantage. When urgent cases render it necessary, the delicacy that has been observed, removes every jealousy which might otherwise be excited, and when the measure is embraced, it is with the sense that those whom it regards will consider it with the same spirit by which it was dictated, and view it with the same interest from which it flowed. Upon these grounds, therefore, he now rose for the purpose of moving an humble address to his Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to interpose his paternal and beneficent interference to remedy the discontents which prevail in Ireland, and which create the most serious alarm for that country, and for the dearest interests of the British empire. He was aware that three grounds of objection might be taken to his motion. It might be deemed an interference with the independent

independent authority of the Irish Legislature, or that it was not called for by any existing necessity, or, thirdly, that it was not calculated to meet the object it professed to have in view. If it were objected, that this was an interference with the independent authority of the Irish Legislature; such an objection, he should have thought it superfluous to answer, had it not been hinted upon a former night, when he gave notice of his motion. But would such an intention be imputed to him who had repeatedly opposed every pretension that could bring that independence into doubt; to him who had reprobated so strongly those measures which interfered with that Legislature when they were about to complete their own work, and when they would have carried it to that perfection which would have removed the causes which produced those discontents that rendered the present interference necessary. This was no question of internal regulation. It was a point of common concern and of mutual interest, upon which both countries had an equal right to stand forward. That cases, for the exercise of this common right, might occur, could scarcely be disputed. He did not wish to make any odious allusion to any former observations, but suppose, as a possible case, that such a disposition of the British fleet was intended as would leave Ireland defenceless, might not the Irish House of Lords interfere by an address to his Majesty, praying that such a measure might not be adopted? If in the course of a negotiation with France any conditions were to be stipulated which would prove particularly prejudicial to Ireland, would it be incompetent for the Irish House of Lords to address his Majesty, and intreat that he would be graciously pleased to interpose to prevent its taking effect? Such objections as this could not be urged with any propriety, or maintained with any success. In speaking of the necessity of the measure he proposed, he rejoiced that it was not necessary to go into any detail. The extent and rapid increase of the discontents which prevailed in Ireland, was a subject of sufficient notoriety to form the ground of this proceeding. He should abstain, therefore, from enumerating the particulars which had come to his knowledge, and of which, indeed, he had recently been witness. They appeared unnecessary to the resolution which the House was now called upon to form. If it was by other noble Lords considered necessary to go into the detail, he hoped he should be allowed, in the usual indulgence of the House the privilege of reply, to give those minute explanations which might be required, and from this
detail

detail he should not be precluded by any thing which he now said. He did not expect to hear that night that the discontents, to which he alluded, were exaggerated. Such mode of reply would not be admitted at a moment like the present. The eyes of the country and of all Europe were fixed upon their Lordships. The attention of the country at large, alarmed at the critical situation in which it is placed, was turned to their Lordships; the public had a right to expect that they would shew themselves honest and careful, that they would not allow a question of such magnitude to be evaded by any objection of form, or any alledged inaccuracy of statement. The time was now past in which their Lordships might be amused with unprofitable disputations. Substantial vigour and energy of conduct were required. The universal sentiment that prevailed was, that the exertion of every honest man and friend to his country was necessary to save the state from the calamities in which it was plunged, and from the dangers with which it was threatened. If their Lordships refused to contribute their part, they would forfeit their credit with the public, they would entail a reproach equally dishonourable to themselves, and pernicious to the country. He should proceed then to state the further grounds of necessity and propriety on which the motion rested. In addressing his Majesty to the effect proposed, the House would not only exercise one of its most important privileges, but fulfil one of its most important duties. They were the hereditary counsellors of the Throne, and no occasion could occur which called more strongly for the exercise of the right. If it appeared that the counsellors more immediately about his Majesty's person, that is his Ministers, had not given that advice which was calculated to ensure the happiness and prosperity of Ireland, they ought to approach the Throne with advice more wise and salutary. If they doubted the wisdom of the advice which had been given, this was the instance for the exercise of their particular function. To act in this manner was to manifest the strongest proof of attachment to the sovereign, and the best pledge of their interest in the public welfare. It might be said, what influence could such an address carry with it to change the councils by which Ireland was governed? In any private company such an objection in the course of conversation could be considered as the result only of ignorance or of impudence. To prove the influence of the British Cabinet he needed only to appeal to a fact which had occurred

curred not very long ago, he meant the recal of Earl Fitzwilliam, at a time when all Ireland concurred in the measures which he pursued, when that country gave the fairest prospect of tranquillity, and the surest pledge of assistance and support to Britain in the difficult and arduous circumstances in which she was placed. To the impolicy of this measure the present distracted state of Ireland was to be imputed. If the British Cabinet could interfere so successfully for what he deemed an impolitic and mischievous purpose, could they not interfere for the salutary end of recommending wisdom and producing good? He was convinced that the general sentiment of Ireland was that of cordial attachment to this country, and that it was the determination of the majority to stand or fall with this country. But, amid the distractions with which Ireland is agitated, the jealousies which prevail, and under the system which now subsists, their Lordships should reflect what advantage was given to the insidious and disaffected spirits to represent the bad effects which resulted from their connection with this country. He could conceive no state of things more fatal than that Ireland should be the subject of continued jealousy and distrust to this country. Unless wise measures were taken to prevent it, such, however, would be the state to which we should be reduced. He trusted that the army upon which we relied for the defence of Ireland would ever remain faithful to their king and to the British empire. But would it not be unwise to trust entirely to this resource? Would it not be impolitic to rely upon this last resort before they had done every thing to obtain a better security. Circumstances could be conceived, in which this support might be overthrown. A similar reliance in another country, without, in time, endeavouring to obtain better security, had plunged it into the utmost misery and distress. Was it wise to trust the vessel upon the ocean with this single anchor? At present it was but too evident that there was no dependance but on force. They ought, therefore, to apply the remedy in time. It was now in their hands. It might be asked, what was the plan which he wished to pursue? This, however, was indicated in the motion itself.—When they addressed his Majesty to interpose his paternal care and benevolence, the known goodness of his nature left no room for doubt as to the result. It was by temper, equity and good faith, that the distractions of Ireland were

to

to be appeased, and their affections conciliated. No good could be expected from a prosecution of the present system. He was confident, however, that the adoption of measures that inspired the people with confidence in the Government would quickly call forth that fond affection of the inhabitants of Ireland to this country, which circumstances might cloud, but could not extinguish, and inspire that zeal so necessary in the present moment, and furnish those resources which were requisite for the critical situation in which we were placed, and the arduous contest in which we were engaged. On these grounds, therefore, he rested the motion which he was then to propose, viz. "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased to interpose his paternal and beneficent interference to allay the discontents which at present subsist in the kingdom of Ireland, and which threaten the dearest interests of the British empire."

Lord *Grenville* lamented that, upon the present important discussion, they were deprived of the assistance of the great talents and experience of the noble Lord who usually filled the woolsack. He was sure, at the same time, that the noble Lord was actuated by a sense of public duty, in his chusing to bring forward a subject of such importance, without regarding the circumstance of that noble Lord's absence, whose wisdom must have proved of so much service, and whose attendance was so necessary to the forms of the House. If he regretted the absence of the noble Lord for these reasons, still he was happy to reflect, that, upon the present occasion, the exertion of eloquence was the less necessary, as he trusted he could shew, from the application of known and acknowledged principles, that the present motion could not be adopted without breaking the solemn compact which had been entered into between the two countries, without tearing asunder every bond of union and connection which subsisted, destroying the fences that with so much care and so much wisdom had been set up, and spreading distraction and division between the members of the British empire. He should therefore give his most decided opposition to the present motion, and to every proposition of a similar tendency. The noble Lord attempted to remove the objection, that the motion was an interference with the independent legislature of Ireland, but in his opinion without success. Conceding, however, for a moment this point, to which he should afterwards advert, he would call the attention of their Lordships to the motion itself. It was stated, that dissensions, distractions, and discontents, prevailed in Ireland; and it was
truly

truly said, that the benevolence of his Majesty's disposition must be anxious to remove them. In the address, however, which the noble Lord proposed, he did not state the cause of these dissensions and distractions. Such an address he conceived to be wholly unnecessary. In the course of a reign of thirty-six years his Majesty had, from year to year, applied himself to remove every ground of uneasiness or discontent which the situation of that country presented. In the beginning of the present reign the people of Ireland had been dissatisfied, but to a much greater degree, and to a greater extent, than upon the present occasion. He would desire any one to compare the state of Ireland, as it was left by his Majesty's ancestors, with its present situation. He would ask them to look at the Catholics admitted to the exercise of their political rights, and to the enjoyment of their property; to the participation of every civil and social blessing; restored to that confidence in themselves which the laws had formerly destroyed; freely permitted to engage in every species of commerce, and to apply themselves to every profession of honour and reputation, sharing the right of voting for members of Parliament; and in their whole conduct manifesting the effects of the benefits they had received in the best manner in which benefits could operate on the human mind. He would desire their Lordships to consider their conduct upon the late occasion, when the enemy, deluded by false representations of the state of Ireland, risked the last wretched remnant of his fleet, and embarked an inferior army, in the rash hope of being able to succeed in their designs, by the disunion of the inhabitants of Ireland. For a proof of the good disposition of the Catholics upon that occasion, he could refer, with pleasure, to the unexceptionable testimony of the reverend prelates who worthily shew themselves their guides in religious matters. [His Lordship read some passages of the circular letter from Dr. Moylan, the Catholic Bishop of Cork.] Thus it appeared that his Majesty's exertions had already been crowned with success; that this success was not perfectly complete was a subject of regret; jealousies had appeared in some degree, but they had been conciliated by the benevolence and the paternal care of his Majesty. What stronger pledge could be given of his Majesty's intention to persevere in the same course, than what he had already done? The Irish had created a commerce with which they were before unacquainted, extended their manufactures, and, what they deemed a more valuable acquisition, had obtained the blessings of a free Constitution. If the motion was intended to implore his Majesty to employ his benevolence and

paternal care to remedy the discontents which prevail, it was unnecessary; but it was not only unnecessary, it was highly dangerous and mischievous. This was a different case from those which the noble Lord had stated. A negotiation was clearly a case of common interest, in which both parties would be entitled to interfere. But if there was any point which could be considered more exclusively of internal regulation than another, it was the present. The motion was intended to apply to the internal state of Ireland, and (if he understood it) to the frame of its independent legislature. About fourteen years ago, when discontents and heart-burnings were represented to exist, on account of the right not much exercised, but broadly asserted in the statute book of the legislature of this country, to make laws to bind Ireland, his Majesty had advised Parliament to disclaim that right, and to repeal the obnoxious statute. This accordingly was done, and the act, 6th of George I. was repealed. Some difficulties that had not been foreseen occurred. A paramount jurisdiction had existed in their Lordships, and appeals were brought before them in the last resort. An appeal having been brought upon this ground, their Lordships very properly passed an act, renouncing in future all such right, and enacting, that Parliament should be restrained from entertaining any Bill which pretended in any degree to bind the inhabitants of Ireland. Now their Lordships were called upon to interfere in a point most exclusively relating to the internal state of Ireland. Such an interference was obviously improper likewise, as it was impossible for them to proceed with sufficient information, which lay much better within the reach of their own legislature. To the general proposition of the noble Lord he had opposed general grounds, and he hoped their Lordships would be aware of the impropriety and danger of adopting it. With regard to the happiness of Ireland, it was an object to which no one could be indifferent; but at present the whole subject was out of its place. Instead of remedying the discontents which prevailed, it would tend to inflame them. It would induce the people of Ireland to imagine that their own legislature was indifferent to their welfare, and thus stir up the divisions which it was the object to appease. As they had given to Ireland the blessings of a free Constitution, the best way to fix their attachment to it was to engage their confidence in its favour. He should therefore give the motion his decided negative.

Earl Fitzwilliam said, that he could by no means concur in the arguments of the noble Secretary, that this country ought never to give any opinion upon the public situation of Ireland.

That

That such interference, for the purpose of averting evils which threatened the two countries, was proper and fitting, he thought extremely clear. What the noble Secretary had said as to the improved state of Ireland was certainly true. But whatever circumstances might have contributed to that prosperity, still there might remain room for something farther to be done. If this was the case, were we to stop, and go no farther, because we had already made considerable progress? A certain class of the people of Ireland had long been held in a state of degradation, and if the circumstances on which this was thought necessary no longer existed, was it not the duty of the House to call upon those who had the authority, to remove the grievances which yet remained? The noble Secretary had said that the people of Ireland were tranquil and happy. But was it a proof of this that Acts of Indemnity had been passed in the Irish Parliament for proceedings beyond the law, which must have been called for by a conduct not very consistent with that tranquillity. If no circumstances of disorder appeared, why were whole parishes, baronies, and even counties, declared to be out of the King's peace? It was likewise stated in the proceedings of the Government of Ireland, that they were disarming the people in certain districts, from which it was evident that they had been in arms. Was this then the state of tranquillity? Was this a state of things by which this country was in no danger of being affected? Connected with each other by the ties of individuals, by mutual possessions of property united under one common head, was it beyond the proper sphere of consideration for the House to address his Majesty to employ his paternal care and benevolence to quiet the minds of the people, to restore the inhabitants of Ireland to tranquillity and happiness? This was a period of serious and awful portent. Dangers and storms threatened our safety and happiness, and it was the duty of the House to allay every discontent to which wisdom could extend, and to fortify the country by every resource which policy could secure.

The Earl of *Liverpool* said, that in his opinion the motion now before their Lordships appeared to him to be improper, whether it was intended to actuate them in their legislative capacity to interfere in the affairs of Ireland, or whether it was meant to influence them to advise his Majesty to exercise his executive authority in a particular way over that branch of the empire. On the latter supposition it was unnecessary, since, as his noble friend (Lord Grenville) had stated, his Majesty, ever since he came to the throne, had been uniformly employed in extending his Royal beneficence

to that people: and on the former supposition it would be highly unbecoming in that House to interfere with the independence of the Irish Parliament, to which alone belonged the entire regulation and management of the internal affairs of that kingdom. Supposing that a motion was to be made in the Irish Parliament for the purpose of inducing it to interfere in the discussion of the great question of Parliamentary Reform, or Catholic toleration in this country, he asked how it would be taken by the British Parliament? And was it less improper for the House of Lords in this country to interfere in the discussion of questions, the decision of which only belonged to the Irish Parliament, and to which its jurisdiction alone was competent? Such discussions, instead of conciliating the affections of Ireland, which was the object of the noble Lord's motion, would awaken jealousies between the countries which would not perhaps be easily removed. He should grant, for the sake of argument, that all the evils complained of by the noble Lord existed to the full extent of his representation, but still he contended that they ought to be remedied by the instruction of the Irish Parliament, the great council of the king in that country, and not by the British legislature, whose interference was calculated only to aggravate the discontents which it was their object to remove. The motion seemed to him to be as mischievous in its tendency, as it was unconstitutional in its principle; and he referred to a speech of the first magistrate of that country, in which the Lord Lieutenant alluded to the bad consequences which flowed from motions of the description now before them. Upon these grounds he should give the proposition of the noble Lord his most decided negative.

The Earl of *Moir* rose in reply to Lord Grenville, and in the first place, he adverted to the objection grounded upon internal interference with the independent legislature of Ireland. He granted that the legislature of that country was independent; but at the same time, he should maintain that in every matter where the common interest of both countries was concerned, the British legislature had a right to interfere. The noble Secretary entered into a long detail of the advantages which Ireland had enjoyed, under the auspicious reign of his present Majesty, which he justly stated to be numerous and great, and, from this detail he inferred, that discontent ought not to exist; but why did he forget, that notwithstanding all the generous liberality which they
had

had experienced from their sovereign, there was still a part of the boon unbestowed? Did he not know that they had still a plea of the strongest kind unanswered? Was he not informed that the Catholics of Ireland insisted upon their right of being elected members of the legislature, upon the ground that if they had had some of their body in Parliament, to speak for them and represent their grievances, the persecutions which have existed would not have taken place? But perhaps it would be said, that he was speaking of persecutions, as vaguely as he had done of discontents, and that the one had as little foundation as the other. He instanced, however, no fewer than ninety one house-holders who had been banished from one of his own estates after being plundered of their property, and many of them wounded in their persons. He felt the difficulty there was of speaking upon this part of the subject, but he was driven to say something upon it by the course of argument which had been adopted by the noble Secretary. The discontents were not confined to one sect only, they were common to the Protestants with the Catholics, and whole counties had been declared to be out of the King's peace, the soldiery having been sent at night to disarm them without the presence of a magistrate, and with orders to use force if it was necessary. Were these things true, and would it be contended that this country was not implicated in the result, or that it was foreign to its duty to interfere? He allowed that the noble Secretary had a strong reason, as an individual, to object to the motion, as it undoubtedly went to convey a censure upon the King's servants. But were their Lordships, at this awful and alarming conjuncture, met to compliment? No. He trusted that the House, indifferent as to the operation of his motion upon the character of Ministers, would overlook all private considerations, and adopt those measures which were most likely to conduce to the safety of the empire. This could be best effected by giving the people of Ireland confidence in their sovereign, by giving activity to that tender and paternal disposition which his Majesty for 36 years has shewn towards his people, and the operation of which has been unfortunately suspended by the indiscreet advice of his Ministers. He thought it the first duty he owed to his sovereign to give him this advice, and therefore he should strenuously maintain the motion which he had had the honour to make.

Lord Grenville replied, and contended that his objections
did

did not originate from a point of form, but from real, essential, and most substantial grounds, as the proposition had for its object a direct interference with the independence of the government of Ireland.

The Earl of *Guildford* professed that after what had been said in support of the motion, and the little that he had heard in answer to it, it was not his intention to add any thing upon the propriety of giving advice to his Majesty. He could not, however, resolved as he was to support the motion, give a silent vote, after what he had heard from a noble secretary upon the danger of discussing the present question, which was no less than tearing asunder the two countries, and destroying the bond of union which now subsisted between them. When a country was reduced to that critical situation in which it became dangerous to discuss its interests, he would ask, whether those who had brought it into that situation, or those who introduced such discussions were the most proper objects of censure? The argument of the noble Secretary went not so much to protect the independence of the Irish Parliament, as to secure Ministers against responsibility. Neither the British Cabinet nor an Irish Lord Lieutenant were responsible to the Irish Parliament; and if they were exempted also from the controul of the British Parliament, to whom were they responsible? He could not admit that Ministers had shewn any attention to the interests of Ireland, since Lord Fitzwilliam was recalled, the measures of whose Administration gave such universal satisfaction. If the advice, therefore, was not necessary to the King, of whose paternal concern for his people he entertained no doubt, it was highly requisite to his Ministers. He concluded with giving his hearty assent to the motion.

Earl *Spencer* confessed that when the notice was given of the motion, there were many objections which occurred to him against it, and these had been confirmed by the discussion of the evening. If the noble Lord meant to do any good by his motion, he ought to have gone much farther, and pointed out both the nature of the discontents, and the kind of measures which ought to be resorted to to remove them. It was decidedly his opinion, for his own part, that supposing the evil was of such a nature as to require a remedy, the remedy ought to be applied by the Irish legislature. The subject was certainly one of great moment to both countries, but he was afraid that discussions of this sort were
calcu-

calculated rather to create new jealousies than to heal past dissensions.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, that if the present was a subject of delicacy, Ministers were the cause of it. There was nobody less inclined to question or to infringe upon the independence of the Irish legislature than he was, but there was a great difference between infringing upon that independence, and acting in their capacity as the great hereditary council of the King. The doctrine which Ministers had held forth he was inclined to think was much more calculated to foment jealousies between the two legislatures than the motion of the noble Lord, were it carried into effect. The lord lieutenant of Ireland, as a Minister, was accountable to the British, as well as to the Irish parliament; and therefore they had a right to watch over the measures of his administration, and to censure or advise him as they might deem proper. The noble Secretary entered into a pompous and elaborate display of the advantages which Ireland had enjoyed under the reign of the present King. But he would ask him, whether the immunities which had been granted to Ireland had not been fully justified by the consequences; and that too after they had been refused by their own legislature? It was in the recollection of almost every noble Lord, that, when a petition was presented to the Irish parliament by a numerous and respectable body of that kingdom, the prayer of it was rejected with something little short of indignation; but, when deputies were sent over to this country, they were graciously received, and their mission was attended with its desired effect. He was not informed of the particulars of the present state of Ireland; but it was notorious to every person that the greatest discontent prevailed. Persecutions had been carried on against the Catholics by a small body of Protestants; and, what was still more alarming, he understood that they now united. The people in the North of Ireland were well known to be of a daring, inflexible character; they were known to be so in the army, in the fleet, and in the literary world, for there were men of literature among them: They might be led, but they would not be forced. The people in the South of Ireland were of a totally different disposition, distinguished by those unruly passions which are the general concomitants of idleness. It certainly, then, required some ingenuity to unite these two different and opposite descriptions of men—an ingenuity similar to that which was necessary to separate Ireland from
this

this country. What the event might be it was impossible to say: he warned them, however, that it might be such as to shake the empire to its centre! And was a subject which involved such consequences to be set aside by a few words about the independence of the Irish parliament, an expression, which, till of late years, used never to be heard of from Ministers? The motion now before their Lordships was couched in terms so wise, so prudent, and so moderate, that he could scarcely have purposed that it could have been objected to. What was its purport? It said to his Majesty, "Sire, you have by a happy conduct attached the people of Ireland to your family and government, by the same liberal and generous conduct by which your grandfather gained the affections of the Highlands of Scotland. There is but one small cause of discontent still remaining, and it is only necessary that you follow up those wise and salutary measures which you have hitherto acted upon to remove it." This was all that the motion proposed. If it was done in time the measures might be successful; but it ought to be recollected that the longer was the delay, the greater was the danger, the breach would grow wider and wider till at length it would be found impossible to heal it. Mr. Erskine, in his admirable pamphlet, had wisely said, give the people of Ireland their rights and you will neither require fleets nor armies to protect them. Three millions of loyal people would defy the power of France, and he begged that it should be recollected that if they were united they might perhaps defy the strength of other countries too? The example of Genoa was before them. The Marquis concluded with quoting the authority of that great statesman Sir Robert Walpole, who considered it as much better policy to comply with the wishes of a nation when they were strongly expressed, even tho' they might be founded in delusion, than to resist the general will, when, as in the case of Ireland at present it was distinctly manifested.

The Marquis *Townsend* thought that his Majesty needed not the advice of their Lordships to entertain a tender regard for the interests of his subjects and therefore he thought it proper for him to dissent from the present motion. He wished, however, that every thing that could tend to ameliorate the condition of the people of Ireland should be done. He enumerated many things of a beneficial nature that had been done, and wished them to be followed up by others. He stated some of the subjects of complaint that appeared to him to be well founded, such as the number of
men

men of large fortune wholly absenting themselves from the kingdom. For these and the like complaints he wished there was a remedy, but he could not approve of this mode of interfering in the regulations of Ireland, and therefore he should dissent from the motion.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* admitted there had been considerable improvements in the regulation of the internal affairs of Ireland. The having ten sessions in the year instead of four, for the trial of offences, he looked upon as a great good. Murders, and other atrocious offences, had been too frequently committed in that country, and the bringing to justice the perpetrators of such horrid acts, was the duty of Executive Government; and it was also the duty of every individual to support government in that respect. Every man ought to support the laws by which property was protected, because society depended upon property and the protection that was afforded it. He had heard that it had been said somewhere else, he would not say where, "that property was the creature of law;" this was an idle and a false assertion; it was so far from being just, that law was rather the creature of property. [This was in allusion to a sentence to this effect, used a considerable time ago by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons.] He saw the necessity of doing much in favor of the poor people of Ireland. That was true indeed was applicable to the state of the people of the country, but more particularly so of Ireland, and if anything could be done by individual example, he was ready to do it. It was a fact well known that there was a great quantity of land which produced nothing at all in Ireland, but which might be made to produce a great deal, and there were there a great number of people who at present have nothing to do, who might be well employed in the cultivation of that land.

He should be glad to join in any plan that might be proposed, either in or out of Parliament, to remedy the defect which he had just hinted at; perhaps to divide a large estate into small and separate properties; by which means he thought the country might be benefited. He had written to Ireland with a view of bringing something of that kind about. But whatever he should do of that nature must be purely voluntary, for he had no idea of force in the distribution or the management of any man's property: nor had he any idea of any plan of this kind, or any other, by which the lower classes

of society could hope for any benefit being set on foot, until an end be put to this disastrous war. What was wanted in the mean time was, that the people should be united. He begged pardon for this digressive mode of speaking, but he thought that these points were called for by what had been urged in some part of the debate.

Lord *Darnley* observed, that the motion before their Lordships was in very general terms, and, therefore, if he thought there existed a necessity for it, he should assent to it, for he did not concur with the noble Secretary of State and the noble Earl, that the House should not interfere at all in the affairs of Ireland. He thought there were some cases in which their Lordships might interfere in such affairs; but he thought that, generally speaking, their Lordships should not interfere in such affairs. He opposed the motion upon the ground that the situation of Ireland, at this time, did not call for it. Since he had known Ireland, he had never known a time when all descriptions of men were so well and so justly satisfied with the administration as they were at this moment. He did not always praise Government in regard to their conduct with respect to Ireland. He thought there were many instances in which Ireland had been neglected, but this was not the period at which he could say so; for he was well persuaded, from what he had lately seen (having been himself in Ireland last summer), that there never was a period in which the execution of Government was so popular in Ireland as at the present time. As proof of this, he would call the attention of their Lordships to the loyalty they had manifested at the approach of the enemy on the coast, who attempted to invade them. He therefore opposed this Address, being convinced it was founded upon an assumption that was not consonant with fact, namely, that there was at this time great discontent in Ireland.

The Duke of *Bedford* professed an unwillingness to dispute what the noble Lord, who had just spoken, had asserted as a fact. But he understood that the great mass of the people of Ireland were Catholics, and that they were at present much discontented with the treatment they had met with. He thought there had been some evidence of that when there was a necessity for an indemnity bill to the protestants for what had happened there. He confessed it would have been to him a matter of wonder, but for the assurance which the noble Lord gave that the Catholics were contented, because it appeared to him a matter of wonder that men should be satisfied who were proscribed all benefits of the State under which they lived; where

where they were marked with disgrace, and put entirely into the hands of the Minister of the Executive Government. But it seemed they gave an instance of attachment to Government, when an enemy was upon their coast threatening them with invasion. Was this the proof that was to be given as a reason that their complaints should be passed by without notice? Had Government shewn any disposition to reward them for this generous attachment? Indeed he thought quite the contrary. He had often witnessed the conduct of Ministers in the discussion of public affairs; he saw how they continually evaded all questions, the discussion of which had any likelihood to bear hard upon themselves. They had often amused their Lordships with very trifling arguments; they had brought forward trifling shifts, by way of form or otherwise, to induce the House to neglect its duty. Really, to speak plainly, their Lordships did neglect their duty, when they took such trifles to be objections against their remonstrating on the conduct of Ministers, when it was apparent, as it had often been, that such remonstrance was called for. But, of all the attempts that he had ever known Ministers to make to screen themselves, the present was the weakest and the most futile. They had not used one argument, they had only made a few assertions, and those they pretended to found upon the principles of our Constitution. It was distressing to see men affect a regard to the Constitution, for the mere purpose of saving themselves from disgrace, when it was notorious that their public acts were a direct violation of the Constitution. The noble Secretary of State had endeavoured to protect himself by a shield which was in itself impenetrable, but the noble Secretary was not entitled to use; he meant, the name and character of the Sovereign upon the throne. There was not one of their Lordships more disposed than he was to pay all due reverence to that sacred character: but, although he knew he was treading on delicate ground, yet he must perform his public duty. He would therefore say, that he knew that many of those acts which have the Sovereign's name to sanction them ought to be considered the acts of the Ministers who advised them; and therefore, in the language of common sense, they were fairly called the acts of the Ministers. He believed that it was to this source we were to trace the distresses which we had sustained. To this was owing the loss of 13 flourishing colonies; to this was owing the disaster of the present national bankruptcy; and to this was owing those discontents in Ireland which it was the object of the motion now before their Lordships to remove. Their Lordships, he was

sorry to say, had too often listened to the trifling shifts of Ministers when any charge was exhibited against them in that House. They must cease to listen to these shifts, if it was their intention to save this State from ruin. But it might be asked, what he thought was likely to restore happiness to the people of Ireland? upon which he had no scruple to deliver his opinion. There was a character in that House who was well known to their Lordships, to the people of this country, and to the people of Ireland, of whom he could say much in commendation, if he were not present, or needed any panegyric; but no praise from him or any other person could exalt him in the opinion of their Lordships, or of the public; of whom, however, he should say more were he not present: he would say, Restore to the people of Ireland that person (Lord Fitzwilliam); give back to them the man whom they have tried, and whom they admire; act on the principles on which he acted; and then, he verily believed, discontents would cease: but if not, perhaps we might see that country in a much more dreadful state than it was at this moment.

Lord *Grenville* rose immediately, and observed, that the noble Duke might think, upon a comparative estimate of talents, his own to be sufficiently superior to Ministers to entitle him to dictate to them. What he chiefly rose for, was, to do away the impression which the noble Duke attempted to make for the purpose of representing him as endeavouring to shield himself behind the name and authority of the Government. He did no such thing. He paid only to his Majesty that tribute which all the world knew to be due to him. He did not ascribe any part of that merit to himself, or to his Administration. He had only said that, during an illustrious reign of thirty-six years, the interest of the people of Ireland had invariably, uniformly, and unceasingly, been an object of the solicitous care of the Executive Government of this country, and this he said without distinguishing one Administration from another in the whole of that period. Having said this, he thought it proper to observe, that their Lordships had no specific remedy proposed to any of the grievances alleged to be felt in Ireland, until the noble Duke had addressed them; and his remedy was, that their Lordships should address his Majesty to restore to Ireland the noble Lord who had been there, and had been recalled. Upon that subject he did not think it became him to say any thing more than this: that in calling upon their Lordships to adopt that remedy, the noble Duke proposed to do the very thing which would have a tendency to create that which he seemed to dread, namely, a
disturbance

disturbance in Ireland, for that would be the tendency of recalling the present Lord Lieutenant of that kingdom. He would not bestow upon that noble Lord any panegyrics, but he would say, what he believed would meet the approbation of the House, which was, that if the talents, the virtue, and exertions of that noble Lord, were not sufficient to preserve the tranquillity of Ireland, without disparagement to any other person, he believed it would be out of the power of any individual to do so.

The Duke of *Bedford* disclaimed all idea of considering his talents, upon a comparative estimate, superior to those of the noble Secretary of State. In one point the whole House would yield the palm to the noble Secretary. He meant in the talent of misrepresentation. The noble Secretary had answered his observations as if he had called on the House to address his Majesty to recall the present Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and restore another to that high and important office. He had done no such thing. Had he any thing of that kind in view, he knew enough of the regularity of the proceedings of the House to be aware that he ought to move that as an amendment to the address. All he had done was merely to give his own individual opinion as to what might be done; the propriety or impropriety of that opinion was for their Lordships to judge of. With respect to the sovereign, he believed he felt as much reverence for him and his character as those who were pleased to use him in the course of the debate to oppose the motion. He was aware that he should shew his respect for that august monarch better by bestowing panegyrics upon his character perpetually, than by passing it by in silent reverence. The occasion called for its being mentioned. When it was mentioned, he hoped he knew how to pay it all becoming respect. He was willing to allow to his Majesty all due praise, but he would add, that notwithstanding all his good acts, his Ministers had contrived to counteract them so effectually, that England was in a state of public bankruptcy, and Ireland nearly in a state of rebellion.

Lord *Darnley* said a few words in explanation, as did also the Marquis Townsend.

Lord *Moir* said he only rose to make a few observations on one or two points that had been insisted upon in the course of the present debate. A noble Lord had unequivocally stated that the mass of the people of Ireland were perfectly contented at this time with the Executive Government.

ment. Without questioning the accuracy of that noble Lord, he must be permitted to say, that that representation of the mass of the people of Ireland, if correct, was very strange. It was known that after the Catholics, had been led to form some hopes of relief, a member of the House of Commons of Ireland, uninvited, and without the least apparent necessity, started up in a debate, and pronounced on the hopes of the Catholics an absolute interdiction. Another member, in the other House of Parliament, equally without necessity, started up and pronounced one sweeping condemnation upon the north of Ireland. Were these things to be considered as reasons why the mass of the people of Ireland were perfectly contented? The noble Lord and himself differed in their representation of the state of Ireland.—He alleged that there were very great and very alarming discontents there. The noble Lord declared that the mass of the people were perfectly contented. Now as their Lordships could not try the veracity of one noble Lord against that of another, the only way they had to decide was by referring to facts. Had not their Lordships heard from authority which they could not doubt, that whole parishes, nay that a whole county, had been declared to be in a state of disturbance, and out of the king's peace? Was not a whole county, and that a maritime one, exposed to invasion, disarmed, on account of its being alleged to be in a state of insurrection? Was that a reason for concluding there was no dissatisfaction there? Was that the case at Belfast? Was not a considerable force employed to make the insurgents surrender? Was that a reason for apprehending there was no dissatisfaction in Ireland? Had not many persons been charged with High Treason, or accused of treasonable practices? Was that an instance of attachment to the government of Ireland? And when all ranks of men surrounded those who were thus accused, and protested that they were innocent, but that they were marked out as victims of the vengeance of government; was that an instance that the mass of the people were perfectly well satisfied? When there was a general assembly in Dublin, within 50 yards of the Castle, consisting of persons whose names were not all unknown to their Lordships, but whose talents and characters were of the very first class, and who, after the most mature deliberation which could be had on such an occasion, declared it to be their firm persuasion, and resolved, that there was no chance for the salvation of
Ireland

Ireland without an entire and immediate change in the whole system of Executive Government ; was that a proof of the general satisfaction of the mass of the people of Ireland? These were the facts, and their Lordships were to judge who was correct in his representation of the state of Ireland.

The numbers on the division were,

<i>Contents</i>	20	<i>Non-Contents</i>	71
<i>Proxy</i>	1	<i>Proxies</i>	20

Adjourned.

LIST OF THE MINORITY.

Duke of Norfolk,	Lord Rawdon, (Earl Moira)
Bedford,	Dundas,
Devonshire,	Ponsonby, (Earl Besborough)
Marquis of Lansdown,	Say and Sele,
Earl of Derby,	King,
Suffolk,	Holland,
Guildford,	Lovel and Holland, (Earl of Eg-
Shaftsbury,	mont)
Fitzwilliam,	Grantley,
Oxford,	PROXY.
Cholmondeley,	Lord Chedworth.
Tankerville,	

A list of Lords who voted for Lord Oxford's address on Thursday March 23, recommending his Majesty to take immediate measures to secure Peace.

Dukes of Norfolk,	Earl of Oxford,
Bedford,	Buckinghamshire,
Marquis of Lansdown,	Guildford,
Earls of Derby,	Lords Say and Sele,
Suffolk,	King,
Thanet,	Holland,
Shaftsbury,	Lovel and Holland, (Earl of
Albemarle,	Egmont, in Ireland.)
Cholmondely,	

PROXY.

Lord Chedworth.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, March 21.

The bill for amending the Scotch Quota bill, the Scotch Bank note bill, and the Militia Pay bill were read a third time and passed. The

The bill for increasing the Rate of Subsistence to Innkeepers on quartering soldiers, passed a Committee of the whole House, and the report was ordered to be received the next day.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *March 22.*

Two bills were brought from the Commons, which were read a first time; and those on the table being read in their different stages, the House adjourned till the next day.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *March 22.*

The Committee of the whole House on the petition from the prisoners in Lancaster Castle, was deferred till the next day.

Colonel *Wood*, under the impresson that idle security was as dangerous to the country as unnecessary alarm, and that his motion on the defence of the country was as proper now as it was when he first gave notice of it, fixed it for Tuesday the 28th instant.

WASTE LANDS.

Sir *John Sinclair* rose in consequence of a notice which he had given to move for a Committee to enquire into the means of improving waste lands, &c. Many gentlemen who at the last session of Parliament a Committee had been appointed to investigate the subject, and that a bill had been drawn up and brought to a considerable degree of perfection. He once intended this session to move for leave to bring in the same bill, but two circumstances had occurred to induce him to alter his intention. He found that in the course of the recess some information had been collected on the general principles of bills of Inclosure, and he also found that it was the opinion of many respectable gentlemen that the plan ought not to be restricted to waste lands, but that it ought to be extended to common fields, pastures, and all arable unproductive grounds, an opinion in which he heartily concurred. It was quite unnecessary for him to dwell upon the importance of the subject. There was enough of land in the kingdom to sustain its inhabitants if it was properly improved, but for the want of this improvement we had been

been under the necessity in 1795 and 1796 of importing one million of quarters of wheat, which cost the nation three millions sterling, and which had been in great part paid for in cash, and this contributed to the present alarming scarcity of specie. He hoped that he would find gentlemen enough in the House to bend the whole energy of their minds to this important subject, and he promised them that they would be amply repaid by the satisfaction they would feel in witnessing the good effects of their labours. He concluded with moving "That a Committee be appointed to enquire into the means of promoting the cultivation and improvement of waste lands, common fields, meadows, common pastures, and other arable lands which are at present unproductive."

Sir *Wm. Pulteney* did not rise to object to the motion, but to make some remarks upon the declaration of the worthy baronet respecting the exportation of coin in exchange for the grain imported into this country. He defied the worthy baronet to produce one instance where a single guinea had been so exported, because it was notorious that people were prevented by the law from sending the coin of the realm abroad, and that all the payments were made in silver bars, or dollars, which, as they were foreign coin, were nothing more than bullion in this country. It was not probable that the merchants would have risked the forfeiture of the law by such a negociation; neither did they, for the purchases of foreign coin were made during the time that the money of this country was remitted to the Emperor, and at a time when the course of exchange with foreign countries was against us. It was the money remitted to the Emperor that had been the greatest cause of the present scarcity of coin, though that circumstance had been denied by ministers. But would the people believe that not a guinea had been sent to the Emperor? Certainly not. And he would state to the House, upon undeniable authority, that of the 4,600,000*l.* granted by Parliament to the Emperor, 1,200,000*l.* had been sent in dollars, and 150,000*l.* in ducats, bars of gold, &c. 7000*l.* of which were in Louis d'Ors. So that if the actual coin of the realm were not remitted, it had either been melted down, or such bullion was remitted as might have alleviated our present distresses. The subject would not stand examination, for if the government had not exported coin to the Emperor, they must have exported that which was equivalent.

Sir *John Sinclair* believed the declaration of the worthy
Vol. II. 1797. 3 K baronet

baronet respecting the remittances to the Emperor to be well-founded; and as the present state of the coinage of the kingdom was one of the most important subjects for the consideration of the legislature, he wished to have it probed to the bottom.

The Committee was then appointed, with power to send for persons, papers, and records. All to have voices who attended.

FOREIGNERS IN GREAT-BRITAIN.

Mr. Keene rose to make some motions concerning the number of foreigners in this kingdom, in which, as they were no party questions, he hoped every gentleman would agree. He thought it wrong to omit any measure conducive to the preservation of the country; and feared the number of prisoners might augment our distresses. He understood it was quite different from what he formerly conjectured; but it was obvious that the alarms arising from a threatened invasion of this country, and an actual appearance of the enemy off the coast of the sister kingdom, had been heightened by the quantity of this description of men in our seaports, and the late violent proceedings of some of them, whom our people had been under the painful necessity of putting to death. He thought it would be a disgrace to this country to retaliate the injuries of France, by sending back her infamous subjects, as she had sent her felons here; nor did he mean with to exercise more severity than was necessary. He understood some preparations had been making by the Government, to remove the French prisoners from the seaports to the interior, but he thought it would be a relief to the country to know their real numbers, and how they were disposed of, and for that purpose his first motion was intended. His other motion related to the emigrants, and such persons as had found an opportunity to obtain a residence in the kingdom, either under the permission or evasion of the Alien Act. He knew many of the emigrants to be men of strict integrity and honour, but he suspected some to be of less noble principles; and he feared there were others whose honour and fidelity would not be able in a time of peril to resist the temptation of betraying us to their own nation. He therefore moved, 1st "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to give orders, that there be prepared and laid before the House, an account of the number of French prisoners

soners in this kingdom ; and an account of the manner in which they are disposed of."

Mr. *Burdon* seconded the motion, not because he suspected ministers of having neglected their duty, but because some information on this subject would be satisfactory to the public.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* was ready to admit, that there were too many foreign prisoners in the seaport towns ; and he was ready to admit also, the difficulty of finding more convenient places. It had always been usual in former wars, for the sake of convenience, to lodge the prisoners in or near seaport towns ; but as this differed in its nature, and the conduct of the enemy, from every former war, a change had been induced, and measures were now effectually taken, to exclude the possibility of danger. One place for the removal of the prisoners was nearly ready, and the others would soon be so. This would do away the first objection of the honourable gentleman, that there were too many prisoners now in our sea-port towns ; but as to the very large number of prisoners in the kingdom, while the war continued, it was a misfortune which they were not likely to get the better of, unless they curtailed the ardour, spirit, and courage of our gallant officers and seamen. He doubted the prudence of conveying an account of the number of the prisoners in the sea-port towns to the enemy, so long as they remain there, or the disposal of them at all ; but, as they were about to be removed, he had no objection to an account of the number, without the disposal. In regard to the enemy, he apprehended they had excited an alarm, which, when their number was authenticated, would immediately subside ; and so far he had no objection to the motion concerning them. But it would not be possible to give a perfectly accurate information of them, because some had left the country, and others had removed from place to place. As the chief alarm, however, rested on the idea of the vast numbers resident in the metropolis, he was happy to acquaint the honourable gentleman, that the Executive Government had already instituted an examination, which was not yet finished. So far, therefore, as the information could, it should be given ; and, as far as related to the metropolis, he believed the accounts would be found tolerably accurate.

Mr. *Keene* then withdrew the latter part of the motion relating to the disposal of the prisoners, when the first part was

put and carried, an address ordered, and such members as are of his Majesty's Privy Council, desired to present the same.

Mr. *Keene* then moved, "That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to give orders, that there be prepared and laid before the House, an account of the number of foreigners arrived in this country since the first of May 1792, and the number now remaining therein, distinguishing the laity and clergy, with the number of each." This motion was put and carried like the former.

Mr. *Dundas* observed, that a tolerably accurate account could be returned of every foreigner at present in the kingdom; but previous to the 1st of January 1793, there was no particular register.

Mr. *Keene* was beginning to reply, when

The *Speaker* begged leave to remind the Gentlemen, that the motion was disposed of.

STOPPAGE OF THE BANK.

The Order of the day being read, for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider a Bill for confirming the Order in Council of the 26th of February last, &c. and the motion being put, that the *Speaker* do now leave the chair;

Mr. *Nicholls* said he felt himself under the necessity of objecting to the *Speaker's* leaving the chair. If it had appeared to him that the Bill then before the House had no object but to protect the Bank from those demands which on the 25th of February it was unable to satisfy, he should have thought it his duty to acquiesce in the *Speaker's* quitting the chair. But if this had intended nothing more than to protect the Bank from those demands which on the 25th of February it was unable to satisfy, two regulations only would have been sufficient for that purpose. First, The Bank should have been restrained from issuing Bank Bills beyond the amount of what were outstanding on the 25th of February; and secondly, To that amount the Bank should have been protected from the demands of the holders of those Bills. But the plan of the Bill was widely different from this. By the original establishment of the Bank they were restrained from contracting engagements beyond the value of that fund which they had advanced to Government; this restriction was taken off in 1794. There still remained another restriction arising from the nature of the Bank transactions,
viz.

viz. that if the Bank issued more Bills than were wanted for the facility of commerce, the holders of those Bills could carry them in, and demand cash. By this Bill this restriction was taken away. If this Bill passed in its present form, would there be any restriction on the Bank from issuing notes to any amount whatever? In this Bill there was no limitation as to the amount of the Bills which the Bank may issue; nor was there any limitation of the loans which the Bank may make to Government. And, if the Minister and Bank Directors are unwilling that there should be an open and direct loan to Government, it would be very easy for the Bank Directors to comply with the Minister's wishes secretly and covertly. The Minister might open a loan, and the Bank directors might enable the Minister's friends to fill that loan, either by advancing money to them on the discount of bills, or on the security of the script itself. He said, he could not consent to substitute a paper currency in the place of gold and silver; he could not consent to convert the Bank into a mint for the fabrication of assignats, leaving those assignats at the disposal of the Minister. They had a recent example in France of what the effect of such a measure must be. The new Bank-paper would soon become depreciated; commodities when purchased for paper would rise in price; the nation, instead of spending one million a week, would spend two; an enormous debt would be contracted, which the nation would be unable to discharge; and when the nation had broke its faith with its new creditors, it would become indifferent about keeping faith with its old creditors; and new and old debt would both vanish together. He said, there were many Gentlemen in this House, whose position and habits of life qualified them to form a better judgment on the subject than himself. He implored them to give it their attention; for his part he viewed the Bill as the most important that had ever been brought into the House.

Lord *Hawkebury* contended that the honourable Gentleman had given no reason against going into a Committee. The discussion to which his objection led, was, Whether or not the Bank should be restricted from issuing beyond a certain quantity of paper? a discussion which certainly belonged to the Committee.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House, and the Bill being ordered to be read paragraph by paragraph, on the clause granting an indemnity to the Bank,

Mr.

Mr. *Dent* observed, that the scarcity of cash which at present prevailed, was partly real and partly ideal. That scarcity had been produced by a variety of circumstances—the alarm of invasion, the melting down of guineas, the sending them abroad, and the immense speculations which had been occasioned by the extended commerce of the country. From the present state of affairs bankers in general were reduced to a situation of the greatest difficulty and hazard. It was not his wish that notes should be made completely a legal tender, but only so far as the debt of the Bank at present extends, and in his opinion the Bank ought to be restricted from issuing any more notes, except with the consent of two thirds of the proprietors.

Mr. *Fox* said he meant to vote against the present clause, for which he should assign his reasons. He wished the Committee to recollect the progress of the Bill. The House of Commons had appointed a Committee to enquire into a limited question, “Whether it was necessary to confirm the Order in Council? And their Committee had reported, not that it was proper in the Bank to obey it, but now that it was issued, and that it had been obeyed, that it was necessary to continue and confirm it. Another Committee was appointed to enquire into the necessity for issuing the Order, and the consequent propriety of the Bank obeying it; but they had not yet delivered in their report. Till this report then was received, he could not give his assent to indemnifying the Bank, for what it might eventually turn out they ought not to have done; on the face of it they seemed to have acted rather culpably than meritoriously. It was much to be regretted, that such a close and intimate connection had subsisted between the directors of the Bank and the Government of the country; and all that he had heard in the course of the last two weeks, tended to make him more and more jealous of any act by which it might be understood that the Bank was obliged to obey an order of the Privy Council or of the King’s Minister. He had been told that the Bank had issued 50,000 guineas for the accommodation of private Bankers. The measure might be right or wrong; he had not the means of judging; but what he found fault with was, the channel through which the accommodation was obtained. The bankers instead of petitioning the Bank, went and petitioned the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who interfered with the directors of the Bank, and by his influence procured for them this supply. Now, every one knew that
credit

credit was of such a delicate nature as to be quite unable to bear the smallest touch of power. What then, was it supposed, would be the consequence of a proceeding, in which private persons went to the Minister, and got him to use his influence to make the Bank extend its credit where it had refused to extend it, and to substitute authority in place of confidence? He had heard, from good authority, that because the Bank was not liberal enough in its discounts, the merchants had recourse to the same channel, and that in consequence of another authoritative interference these discounts were extended. Could any man believe that public credit could stand against such transactions? If the Chancellor of the Exchequer only advised the Bank as a simple individual, he thought that after all that had happened, the Bank had chosen a very bad counsellor; but if he advised them in quality of King's Minister, what would Europe think of the credit of that country were orders were given by the King to the Bank to accommodate particular persons. It was not only contrary to the principles of a free constitution, it was also inconstant with the existence of public credit. Such an interference in private concerns must undoubtedly destroy its stability; but perhaps he should be told, that though individuals were concerned, the effects of the interference were public. This might be said of all private concerns whatever, but still in the affairs of individuals the King and his Ministers were excluded from interfering. He was against granting indemnity to the Bank for another reason, which was, that if the state of things was what it had been represented, and if the persons who entered into the associations which had been so much talked of, were sincere in their professions, no indemnity would be necessary. If these associations were extensive enough to protect the Bank for the future, they might certainly be trusted as amply sufficient to protect it for the past. Feeling, therefore, that no indemnity was necessary, that they were not in possession of any grounds upon which, consistently with their duty, they could grant indemnity to the Bank, and feeling, as he did, the danger of allowing the King's Ministers to interfere in its concerns, he should vote against the present clause.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said he did not see that this clause could by any means operate to preclude the judgment of any gentlemen hereafter, when the report of the Select Committee should be delivered upon the necessity of the
Privy

Privy Council's issuing an order for restraining the payments of the Bank in specie, or the propriety of the Bank acting in obedience to that order; since this clause, in conjunction with the general nature and intention of the Bill, had for its object to confirm and continue the minutes of Council by limiting the payments of the Bank in specie. He thought it both natural and just when the Executive Government issued the Order of Restriction, and the Bank acted in obedience to that order, inasmuch as that order, till authorized by Parliament, was not of legal validity to save them harmless, and sanction them from incurring the penalty which the forfeiture of their engagements exposed them to. The House previously referred the enquiry of the necessity of continuing and confirming that Order of Council; and that necessity had been not only stated to the House by the report of the Committee, and the present Bill ordered upon it; but it had been admitted also by the right honourable gentleman himself; and it was very natural he should admit it, although he might have entertained the worst opinion possible of the original necessity for issuing the restriction; since it had been issued, he might conceive it to be both politic and wise to argue the necessity, at least for a limited time, of its continuance. If the Bank had suspended its payments, therefore, when the Executive Government thought it expedient, both for the preservation of the public credit and the convenience of the state to do so, and acted as required by the orders of the Privy Council, and afterwards on the authority of a Committee chosen by Parliament—would Parliament then leave them open to the penalties for their obedience, and not endeavour to secure them from the forfeiture? In regard to the report of the Select Committee, appointed to enquire into the necessity of continuing the Order of Council, he did not consider that report to be so much confined as the hon. gentleman had stated, for the Committee had expressed it to be their opinion, that it was not only necessary to continue that order, but to confirm it also. And here he hoped the House would do him the justice to recollect, that in a former discussion he had expressly stated, that he wished to leave the question of the original necessity open to the most impartial and minute inquiry; being desirous that the House and the country should examine and pronounce how far the Executive Government had been deserving of applause or censure, of approbation or punishment, for the measures they had taken; but if upon enquiry it should be found that their
opinion,

opinion, recommendation, and proceedings had been right, he hoped and trusted that the House and country would not then refuse indemnity. As to the Bank he conceived it ought not to be hastily condemned; nor should it be left to suffer all the penalties it might incur for a too ready compliance with the orders of government. But the right honourable gentleman had founded his disapprobation on an allusion to a couple of facts, in which he wished to establish a rule, that it was highly culpable in the Bank, or any other set of individuals, to act in obedience to the opinion or recommendation of government. The fact was true, that the bankers, to prevent the sudden mischief of refusing the total payment of cash in small sums and fractions, did wish to assist their customers, and accordingly made application for a supply of cash to a limited amount. As the Bank had previously consented to act in obedience to the Order of Council, and faithfully adhered to that opinion, it did not feel itself at liberty to render that supply of cash upon the application of the bankers, without the authority of Council; and thus, if it had acted wrong, it acted solely on the grounds of public honour, public faith, and public interest, and not on the grounds of private collusion or of private convenience. If the sum issued was to a larger or a smaller amount than the nature of the time and case would justify or require, there was one consolation in the experience, that the pressure was not so great as had been expected. The sum issued was to the extent of 50,000 guineas; and it was issued, not according to the direction or controul of government, as the right honourable gentleman had seemed to insinuate, but in such proportion, and according to such a distribution as a Committee of Bankers, chosen by the bankers themselves, had prescribed. In regard to the other circumstance stated by the right honourable gentleman, of the increased assistance given by the Bank to individuals, it was equally true, that recently the discounts of the Bank had been increased by a larger issue of Bank notes, for the accommodation of those persons who preferred that paper on the usual species of security; and it was true also, that he had at all times as strongly expressed as he could possibly express an opinion so decided, that the utmost liberality in that sort of accommodation was adviseable at this conjuncture, to diminish difficulties, to assist commerce, to relieve the public credit, and restore their own former transactions. This opinion, however, he expressed as likely to lead gradually to a diminution

of the public distresses, and the restoration of public confidence and credit, and not as any injunction or exercise of authority. It was merely the recommendation of his opinion in his individual capacity, which left the Bank, after all, perfectly free to act upon the independent exercise of its own discretion, and he was content to appeal to the judgment of any man who considered the fluctuations of trade, and the nice equilibria upon which the various branches of commerce depend, whether under all the circumstances of the case this was not the wisest, most salutary, and the most effectual mode of relieving public credit? So far he was ready to allow the Bank was under no restriction of issuing its notes to those who chose to take them, but in doing so the Bank acted on the independent exercise of its own discretion, although it might concur with government in the opinion and propriety of such a measure. This, however, did not vary the point one way or the other, whether the Bank was competent to fulfil all its engagements to the amount of such an extent of paper currency; nor whether it would be prudent, safe, or proper for the House to indemnify such engagements. The right honourable gentleman, indeed, had brought his argument against the indemnification, to bear upon the supposed point of a connexion between the Executive Government and the Bank, as if the extended discounts of the latter were absolutely given in consequence of a command from the other.

There was only one other point, and that was a very important one indeed—he meant the consideration of how far it might be prudent or necessary to extend their protection, if it should be given to the Bank, to persons of a different description. “Upon this subject (said Mr. Pitt) I do not wish to state any thing final. As far as relates to individuals, the disposition of accepting and receiving Bank paper by associations and general consent, may allay the fears and anxieties of individuals, and render other measures, such as those of a legislative interference unnecessary. It is true, of late some representations have been made to me of the expediency and propriety of some such sort of legislative interference and protection, but I wish to suspend my final judgment, and not commit myself by any declaration on this subject. It may be true, that associations and general consent may be sufficient to secure protection to individuals for the future, and in some measure indemnify them for the past, and yet it does not follow that such associations are entirely to prevent the
the

the responsibility of the Bank, because it is one thing to associate for the convenience and general interest of individuals, and another to suppose that the individuals so associating will abstain from drawing cash out of the repository where they know it to be lodged."

And here then he came back to the original question, to ratify and confirm the Order of Council, and the obedience of the Bank, so as to save those harmless who were merely acting in obedience to the Government, and in consequence of the report of the Committee, and he trusted that both the right honourable Gentleman and the House would not feel themselves to have acted consistently, if they did not agree to give that sort of protection which they had in some measure pledged themselves to do, when the Bill was ordered by the House to ratify and confirm the restrictions of payment in specie, reserving to themselves at the same time the propriety of judging of the conduct of those with whom the restriction originated.

Mr. Fox, in reply, stated that the question was not, whether the Bank ought to be indemnified for obeying Parliament; but, whether it ought to be indemnified for obeying the Order in Council? the necessity of issuing which yet remained to be shewn. Perhaps it was highly culpable in the Bank to obey the Order; and yet, in consequence of that obedience, it might have become necessary to continue the Order, which was all that the Committee had reported: but if there was no ground upon which they could judge whether the Bank had acted properly or improperly, there was surely no ground upon which they ought to grant past indemnification. The honourable Gentleman contended, that the association might give currency to paper; but that they could not prevent demands being made upon the Bank for cash. Admitting the argument in its full force, and to its full extent, it could apply only to future, and not to retrospective indemnification, and therefore was wholly inapplicable to the present clause. With respect to the other part of his speech, he reminded the hon. Gentleman, that he did not blame the measure of the Bank issuing 50,000 guineas for the accommodation of private bankers, he only censured the channel by which this accommodation was obtained. On the subject of his using his influence with the Bank, to induce them to enlarge their discounts, the honourable Gentleman pleaded, that he only expressed his opinion as an individual; he hoped, then, that in future, in all the communications which he may have with the Bank, the Directors would always consider him in this point of view.

Mr. Fox remarked, however, that these changes of character were not always distinctly understood, and that he had much rather that any other man should advise the Bank than the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The honourable Gentleman contended that the Bank enlarging its discounts was the best mode of extricating it from its present difficulties. He should not enter at present upon this discussion, but should content himself with declaring, that he was of a quite contrary opinion, and that the farther its paper currency extended, the more its difficulties would increase. But even supposing, that, contrary to the usual mode of proceeding, the discounts of the Bank were to be enlarged in an inverse proportion to its specie, it by no means follows that the Minister should be the go-between the merchant and the Bank; for when the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave advice to the Bank, his wisdom would be less considered than his power. And if this observation was good in every instance, it was particularly so in the present; after the Minister had shewn the Bank that, whenever he thought proper, he could, by an Order in Council, seize upon their cash. He hoped in future, therefore, that when the Bank granted accommodation hereafter to the merchants, it would be through a different channel than the Minister.

Sir *F. Baring* said, that he thought the present measure not sufficiently explicit, nor that it went far enough. It was extremely hard that the Bank should be protected from the consequences of refusing payment to their creditors, while individuals in a similar situation were deprived of this benefit. The consequences of the measures which had taken place were not yet fully understood. Associations might tend to prevent the mischiefs which might arise at home from the state to which the Bank was reduced, but the evil which might be felt in communications with foreign states was very serious. He was afraid that foreign merchants would draw upon this country bills payable only in gold and silver, and the Bank continuing to issue notes, and individuals struggling to procure specie to answer such bills, the consequence would be a depreciation of Bank paper. A similar effect had been produced in Spain, and it was an object of the first importance to guard against it in this country.

Mr. *W. Smith* said, that he had not been in the House when his honourable friend (Mr. Fox) stated his objections to this clause, and did not know whether the observations he had to offer had been already stated in the manner in which he felt them to apply. The reasons for which he should oppose this clause

clause were, that the Bank might have been culpable in the course of their transactions with Government, and their conduct might have been such as not to entitle them to an indemnity for refusing the just claims of their creditors. This was a point which had not been ascertained, and till it was ascertained, it was impossible to judge of the propriety of an indemnity. With regard to the interference of the Minister as to the conduct of the Bank with regard to their discounts, he could not conceive so monstrous an idea to be entertained as that the Minister should interfere in any other than his private capacity. The Committee, however, did not at present know whether that interference had taken place in consequence of the application of the Bank, or of individual merchants. If it was through the last, he doubted whether such an application was very proper. He was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was so anxious to acquit himself of any suspicion of having given his advice in an authoritative manner. For the truth of what he asserted he gave him full credit, as he could not conceive that such an extravagant and criminal pretension could enter into his head, or influence his conduct.

Mr. *Manning* said it was right that the House should fairly understand the principles on which the Bank had acted with regard to the liberality with which their discounts were managed. The Bank had come to the determination of extending their discounts, from their conviction that such a measure would be productive of advantage; nor had their judgment been at all influenced by Government. It was after considering the representations of commercial men that the Directors had exercised their independent discretion, and adopted the line of conduct which they pursued. It was of the greater importance to explain this distinctly, as he conceived the purity and complete independence of the Bank were of the highest importance to the State, to themselves, and even to the Administration of the country. He believed no commercial man could doubt the propriety of the conduct which the Bank had last week observed. He concluded with expressing a confident hope that the Bank would be completely restored, and that it would very soon go on as before.

Mr. *S. Thornton* confirmed what had been said by the last speaker, that the measures which the Bank deemed it proper to take, in regard to discounts, had originated solely in themselves.

Mr. *Elford* said a few words in favour of the clause.

Mr. *Fox* said, he was happy to hear from the authority of the two honourable Gentlemen (Mr. Manning and Mr. Thornton),

Thornton), who were Bank Directors, that the Bank had acted entirely upon their own discretion. What he had stated was upon general rumour, and upon the natural conclusion of certain proceedings, from which the interference of Ministers was presumed. He hoped the declaration of these honourable Gentlemen would have the good effect to convince individuals that, with regard to the conduct pursued by the Bank, it was mere loss of time to apply to Ministers, and that, as the Bank were the best, they were the real managers of their own concerns.

Mr. *Pollen* said, it was right to know, before they passed an indemnity for the Bank, whether they had acted in such a manner as to deserve it. In the present situation of things there was nothing on which to found an opinion either of their guilt or innocence. As well might Ministers themselves come forward, and ask a bill of indemnity for advising the Order in Council, while the propriety of that step was in course of discussion. He was willing that the Bank should be held harmless till it was known, from enquiry, whether or not they had deserved it; but he could not think of consenting to an unqualified indemnity before full information on the subject was obtained.

The *Solicitor General* said, that gentlemen seemed to mistake entirely the point before the Committee. The question merely was, whether they would act upon the report of the Secret Committee, in giving that confirmation to the act of Council which was recommended in the report? The previous conduct of the Bank would still be left open for future discussion. The objections which had been urged seemed rather objections to the principle altogether, than to the particular clause.

Mr. *Bastard* said, that it was with very great diffidence that he rose to give his opinion; but upon a subject of such enormous magnitude, which he viewed in a light which perhaps occurred to no other gentleman, he thought it necessary to explain the vote he should give. In a matter of such vast importance he could give faith and credit to no man living. He required positive proof to justify every step which was taken. All that was at present known was contained in the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on which the Order of Council was founded. So far then he went along with it, but there was nothing there to authorise them to go the length of refusing to pay the public creditor in specie. He was not ready to say, from any circumstances of which they were in possession, that they should sanction the Exchequer in refusing to pay the public creditor in money, because they were to enable
the

the Bank to with-hold the payment of their notes to their individual creditors. He should therefore vote against the whole of the clause, except in so far as it was confined to that particular object. The real cause of the situation which rendered that necessary was the alarm which men had conceived when they saw the safety of this country left to the winds and waves; when they saw the possibility of a French fleet insulting our shores with impunity; and when they saw that the House refused to enquire into the circumstances by which this extraordinary event had happened; they saw the embarrassments which prevailed at the Treasury, and they were alarmed at the situation of public affairs. Rumours had prevailed that still farther demands would be made for the public service beyond what had already been granted as sufficient for every expence, and the consideration of these circumstances had produced the run upon the Bank. Parliament had been at no pains to clear up these rumours, and to shew that they were unfounded, to prove that effectual measures should be taken to guard our coasts in future. Such conduct, however, was not calculated to alleviate the distress of the present eventful crisis. If Parliament wished to obtain confidence, they ought to give a pledge that they acted a disinterested part; they ought to cut off all motives of action but those of the public welfare; and, if they could not make men honest from principle, they ought to make men upright from necessity. The alarm which the public felt was, that Parliament would not act upon these principles. This was the alarm from which real danger was to be apprehended. It was not the attempts of the enemy which we had to dread, for never did the spirits of Englishmen beat higher; but they were alarmed at that House; they were afraid that its conduct would not be dictated by its duty. Sacrifices must be made in the present state of public affairs; such sacrifices as no man could ever have conceived would have been necessary. But, could the people be called upon to make them; could they be expected to comply with the demand, unless they had confidence that what they had granted would be applied to the purposes for which it was intended, and that œconomy would be extended to every department of public service. Instructions had gone to the Committees which had been appointed, to enquire what retrenchments could be made, and he understood that these Committees were doing their duty fairly. But as it must be long before they could be ready to present their reports, he conjured the House, in the mean time, to give the public a pledge that they would deserve its confidence. With regard to the indemnity they were called
upon

upon to pass, he did not know to what it was to apply. Was it for complying with the act of Council, or for having obeyed it? for the Bank had done both. They ought either to have acted upon that order or totally have refused it. He had no doubt in his own mind of the culpability of the Bank Directors, and wished an enquiry into their conduct. Parliament ought to cut off entirely that connection which had been fatally established between Government and the Bank, from which a great part of our present calamity arose. It would not do to patch and patch the garment till it fell to pieces. They must take vigorous and effectual measures. They must try to pay off what was due by Government to the Bank: and after the people were called upon to contribute for that purpose, they ought to dissolve the connection which had been found so prejudicial. Parliament should be restored to its privilege of exclusively bestowing grants of public money, and all Ministers, be they who they may, should be deprived of the power of raising supplies without its consent. The merchants of London had applied to the Minister to use his interest with the Bank to procure that accommodation which they were denied. To this state of degradation were those reduced who formerly were so powerful and so cultivated. "How were the mighty fallen!" might now be said of them. Let the merchants of London, however, apply themselves to their commerce, and not attempt to support themselves on the power or authority of Ministers. If they really felt the necessity of such an application, they ought to have come to Parliament with a statement of their complaint. It was not a point for Ministers to interfere in; it came within the privileges of Parliament, which he could not allow to be passed over with neglect.

Lord George *Cavendish* said, that he was not yet prepared to give any opinion with regard to the conduct of the Bank, but certainly at present it appeared in no very favourable light. He thought, however, that the House ought to part with as little controul as possible. He should therefore oppose the clause.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* said the question before the Committee seemed to be entirely misapprehended.—Did Gentlemen mean that the indemnity was only to commence with the act? did they consider the extraordinary situation in which the Bank would be placed? The Order of Council was communicated to the Bank late on Sunday night, or early

early on Monday morning, and a few hours afterwards the message was received from his Majesty, communicating the event. The Committee then could not mean to subject the Bank, acting upon this Order only a few hours before it came before the House, to all the inconveniences which would arise from the intermediate delay of three weeks. There was no instance, where indemnity was given, in which it did not draw back to the act which made it necessary. He conceived, therefore, that here likewise the Indemnity would go back to the very act on which it was founded.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, that he thought he understood the clause. It was of no importance whether it was five minutes or five months between the period of the communication to Parliament, and the obedience which the Bank gave to the Order of Council, for in that intervening space the important step was taken. As the propriety or impropriety of this step, therefore, was to be the subject of consideration, and as there was nothing on which to form a judgment, he could not agree to the clause of Indemnity.

Mr. *Dundas* then asked, when it was meant that the Indemnity should begin? To which Mr. *Whitbread* answered, "not till the act took place."

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the honourable gentleman had asked if ever there had been an act of Indemnity that did not go back to the first step on which it was founded, and it was true that such was the mode when the House approved the measure; but the propriety of the indemnity to the Bank was not yet ascertained. To give an indemnity without examination was to establish the principle that the Bank was always right to obey an Order of Council, and were always to have an act of Indemnity. Whether an indemnity was to be given to all bankers was a difficult question. No association could secure merchants and bankers against demands in specie from abroad. It was a degrading situation to which they were reduced: left to the mercy of those who were mischievous enough to press for payments in cash, while they had no means of making the payment. With regard to the liberality of the Bank in discounts, he knew that those who held the propriety of the Bank limiting its discounts, were represented as men who wished to cripple commerce by withholding those accommodations which were necessary to its support. So far, however, was he from wishing to deprive commerce of any means of support

and encouragement; that he thought the Bank instituted for commercial purposes, and wished to see that connection between Government and the Bank dissolved, by which it had been prevented from fulfilling its proper purposes. He wished this divorce to take place, that commerce might receive that share to which it was entitled, and that the Bank might safely exercise that liberality of discount which was required. If there were two customers, one of which had obtained accommodation to the amount of ten millions, and the other three, how was it possible that the commercial advantages to be expected could be derived from the Bank? Public meetings had been held, at which a respectable member of the House (Alderman Lushington) had presided, at which it had been resolved to apply to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to interpose his authority with the Bank. From this it appeared that the Bank had been thought to be niggardly, and the success which these gentlemen had so soon experienced from their application had naturally been imputed to the authority of the Minister. He was glad to hear, however, what had been said by the two Directors of the Bank. Till the co-operation, not to say collusion, which had been manifested by the Bank in all the transactions of government was abolished, the credit of the Bank could never be restored. He was desirous to know if the arguments used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were coupled with a promise to pay what was due by government? If not, the Bank by continuing to issue paper without limits, would soon be reduced to a state of absolute insolvency. Those who had access to any of the Bank Directors, well knew, and a noble friend of his (Lord Lauderdale), a person not apt to take up a fact upon slight grounds, had stated in his work upon the finances of the country, that ever since Spring, 1796, remonstrances had been made to Ministers against sending so much money out of the country, and stating that the ruin of the Bank would be the inevitable consequence. He hoped this was true, for it would afford some prospect that by better management their affairs might be retrieved. He did not think that there was any cause for haste in the present measure. Notwithstanding the intimation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer when this business was first opened, that it was necessary to follow up the Order of Council by a legislative measure without delay, a month had nearly elapsed without any thing being done; and if a judgment could be formed from the time it had been in preparation, there would be no
end

to the Bill should it be carried into effect. He would repeat, therefore, what he had said before, that it would be better to suspend the proceeding altogether than to hazard the evils which its enactment, without the prospect of a limitation, would produce.

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* said, he imagined that two respectable Bank Directors had already sufficiently explained how far the interference of the Minister had been exercised between the Bank and the merchants. With respect to the circumstance mentioned by the honourable Gentleman in which he had been principally concerned, he would state to the House the transaction as it happened. The merchants of London were considerably alarmed at the great want of specie in the country; in consequence of which, he called a meeting of them together for the purpose of adopting some measure which might tend to remedy the evils complained of. The result of their first conference was, that of waiting on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who heard their statements with great attention; to their request, that he would use his endeavours with the Bank to procure a supply of specie, the honourable Gentleman answered, that he had no power whatever to act in such a business; but at the same time admitted, that the increase of commerce required a more increased circulation of cash. Upon this, finding that no relief could be obtained, he at another meeting with the Directors of the Bank produced to them an irresistible document, which proved beyond a doubt the absolute necessity of enlarging their discounts, and of accommodating the mercantile interest in a more extensive way. The document to which he referred was, nothing but a statement of the vast increase which the commerce of the country had experienced. It plainly shewed that the exports of the nation had augmented since the year 1790 to 96, in no less a sum than 16 millions, and that the exports alone, during that period, had increased from seventeen and eighteen millions, to near thirty. It was with particular satisfaction he had to state that an accommodation had been afforded by the Bank Directors to the merchants. Every person experienced the inconvenience arising from the quantity of circulating medium bearing no proportion to the commerce of the country; and it was absolutely necessary that some principle should be devised to remedy that evil.

Sir *Francis Baring* said, that an improving commerce required no aid but what it derived from its own energy and resources,

resources, and that the difficulties under which it laboured, was the result of the political circumstances of the country, and not of the want of a circulating medium, which commerce was always able of itself to supply.

Mr. Alderman *Lushington* said, that the political circumstances of the country certainly contributed to the pressure and increased the necessity of the accommodation, because that which should go to the support of commerce is diverted to other purposes. The war, therefore, and the events connected with it, produced the difficulties which it required the aid of the increased liberality of accommodation to alleviate.

Mr. *Sheridan* left it to the worthy Magistrate to reconcile his position, that a prosperous commerce required additional aid, with the admission, that the political circumstances of the country had so crippled commerce, as to demand a more extensive scale of accommodation.

Sir Benjamin *Hammet* said a few words, as did likewise Mr. *Brandling* and Mr. *Grey*, and Mr. *Sheridan* in explanation.

Colonel *Wood* wished that the indemnity should be continued only till the report, which would explain how far the conduct of the Bank had been proper.

Mr. *Dundas* again contended that the question merely was, when the indemnity should begin.

The Attorney General defended the Committee of which he was a member, in not embracing a larger field of enquiry, and making a more full report. He said that the indemnity was merely to protect the Bank against the legal consequences of having obeyed the act of Council. He concluded with solemnly declaring it as his opinion, that if the House did its duty the country was safe; but if political attachments led to concealment of the seriousness of our situation on the one hand, or to the exaggeration of it on the other, no man could calculate the evils it would produce.

The question was then called for, and the clause carried without a division.

The second clause being read,

Mr. *Fox* said, that he intended to move for an exception to this clause with regard to dividend warrants. That the clause was meant to comprehend these could not be doubted, but if so, it should be more clearly and specifically expressed. As they were not considering at present the propriety of creating some new circulating medium, but deliberating
upon

upon a measure by which the public faith was broken with the public creditor, by refusing to pay him in cash, he now gave notice that he should move as an amendment to this clause, "that the Bank should be prohibited from making any advances to Government by which the existing debt should be encreased during the continuance of the present act."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he should object to the introduction of any such clause. If the necessity of adopting the present measure arose from the present scarcity of cash in the Bank, that circumstance, was incompatible with tendering payment of the public dividends in cash. Mr. Pitt remarked that the precise stipulation with the public creditor was to pay the public dividends at the Bank. The sums issued from the Exchequer to the Bank, and the payment of sums due to government were usually paid in Bank notes. The necessity of the present measure must necessarily operate to direct the payments of dividends in Bank notes, nor was it reasonable, during the present temporary and national embarrassment, that the receivers of dividends should be the only persons not to share in the consequences, which the pressure of the moment unavoidably occasioned.

Mr. *Fox* said, that the doctrine held by the right honourable gentleman was very alarming, as it opened a way to the most dangerous fraud upon the public creditor. Was it the same thing to be paid in Bank notes, convertible into cash, and notes which could not be so converted? The words, "I promise to pay," still remained in the notes, but they bore no other resemblance to the Bank notes which the public creditor had received in payment. It was a promise which now no longer could be fulfilled. Formerly the Bank had that proportion of cash to their notes, which there was a reasonable prospect of being demanded: to issue paper without preserving this proportion, had in former times been deemed fraudulent. That proportion was no longer maintained. Necessity had compelled the government to defraud the public creditor, by offering him that which the law never had in contemplation when it secured him 5 per cent. for his money. This was the fulfillment of the event predicted by Mr. Hume: When government was to lay its hands on the sums provided for the payment of the public creditor, the government, not the Bank, is the debtor, and the refusal of payment is the act, not of the Bank, but of the government.

Sir

Sir *Wm. Pulteney* said, that what had happened to the public creditor, in his not having the payment of his debt in specie, was undoubtedly a fraud upon him; it was certainly a fraud not to pay a man in gold and silver, when gold and silver were due to him. But although he said this, yet he was ready to admit that in a great country like this, fraud itself was a thing to be submitted to, if it was impossible for the state to avoid it; or in other words, necessity if it was an absolute one, was an answer for any thing that could happen. But the question now was, what was prudent to be done? Suppose the restriction upon the Bank was only to continue for a month, he believed that many people would be discontented; but he did not believe that the evil would be great, for that the mass of the people would not object to it. The objection he had to the bill now before the Committee was to him a decisive one; the Bank should be allowed to pay one day or other in specie, but by this bill it did not appear at present that they were ever to do so; should the day to which the operation of the bill was to continue, be at a moderate distance, the panic and the terror which created the run upon the Bank would soon cease, and every thing would go on as usual. What bullion and specie there was in the Bank now, ought to be secured there for awhile, but not for ever; nobody imagined that the Bank was to be shut for ever as to the issuing of specie for paper, and that was the reason why the paper was now so current; and therefore to continue that currency a short time should be inserted in the bill, after which the Bank should be allowed to pay in specie. The great thing to be considered in this business, was, in his opinion, the limitation of time, during which the Bank was to be restrained from paying in money; but at present there was no time fixed, and all that appeared to refer to that subject, was a clause at the end of the bill which gave power to Parliament to alter or amend it in the course of the present session. That appeared to him to be much too indefinite, there should be a period fixed, at which the restriction ceased, and when the solidity of the Bank should be made to operate in favour of the public creditor. If, after that time it should appear that the Bank could not go on, let them give up like other companies who were unable to pay the demands upon them. It appeared to him to be better that a time should be fixed, at which the Bank should pay in money, even if it should be a long one, than that it should be indefinite, for so it would be, if there was only a clause in the bill to em-
power

power Parliament to alter as occasion should require. That was much too vague a thing to satisfy the holders of Bank paper. The Minister deceived himself sadly if he thought he could, in this way, be able to support the credit of any paper long. Paper that could not at any specific time be converted into gold, would soon depreciate. It was not to this country only that we were to look for the effect which this measure would have. We should turn our eyes to Hamburgh, and to other places, and see what effect this was to have on the price of foreign articles, on which so much of our trade and commerce depended. Did any man in his senses imagine, that if this stoppage of payment in specie was to be of long duration, that the merchant would not advance the price of his foreign articles? This appeared to him to be a great evil; and he had no idea of assenting to any bill of this kind, unless the duration was fixed, and that to be a short one.

The *Attorney General* thought that, as to the duration of the bill being too long, he conceived that its being left to the wisdom of Parliament to alter the bill at any time in this session, was an answer to the objections of the honourable baronet. He conceived the subject to be such, that Parliament could not at this moment prudently fix the duration of the restriction upon the Bank. Besides, the House might by limiting the time now, place themselves in a very distressing situation, for if it should happen, after the House had limited the time, that the commercial, or if he might be allowed to use the phrase, "the monied world," should be restored to its former state before that time expired, the House would find that it had no power to put an end to the restriction before the time limited by the bill, although the cause of it had ceased.

Having made these few observations on the sentiments of the honourable baronet, he said, he would proceed to make a few on those of the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox.) He apprehended that the creditors of the Bank, he meant the proprietors of stock and the claimants of dividends upon stock, should not, in case of public exigency, call for payment in specie, any more than any other creditors upon a private banker. He should apply his observations to the facts of the present case, and give his opinion upon the law of this country, as it appeared to him to apply to it. Any man having a claim upon another, might demand payment of that claim in money. Generally speaking, however, creditors

creditors had been satisfied with the payment of their demands in Bank bills; for it was well-known that, from the extension of commerce in this country, it was impossible that all debts could be paid in specie. In the case of a private banker, persons who were his customers deposited money with him for the convenience of their own concerns; they did so certainly on the faith that he would always have a due proportion of cash in his possession to answer any drafts from day to day they should draw upon him, but he knew very well that, if all his creditors were to come upon him at once, that he could not have cash in possession sufficient to answer them all, for they all must know that the profits of his business must consist in laying out at interest and in advantageous commerce a great portion of their property deposited in his hands, in which consisted the profit of the banker. If gentlemen did not apply this observation to the case which was before them, he would venture to say they had not duly considered the subject that was now in discussion; and if they proceeded without due consideration of this fact, they might hereafter have great reason to lament that they had not so considered it. He felt principles of attachment, by which he would abide as long as he lived; but he would never sacrifice the interest of this country to his private attachments. He allowed it might be difficult to distinguish, in some cases, between attachment and public duty, but it was not difficult for any honest man to sacrifice his private interest to his public duty.—That was his feeling upon the present business. Having said this, he would ask, whether it was not a monstrous proposition to lay down, that if a private banker could not answer at any one time the demands of his creditors, should they all come upon him, that yet the Bank should be expected to do so? When gentlemen talked of the legal payment of debts, they did not perhaps consider the extent to which that might be carried. If a man owed him money, and offered him guineas in payment, he did not know that he made good the strict legal obligation he was under; but if a banker was called upon by all his customers to make good at once in specie, the whole of their demands; what was he to do? He certainly could not satisfy them. He would say, “here are my funds; look at the value of them; it is true they are not money, but they are convertible into money; you must have known that if you all came upon me at once, I could not pay you all in money.”—What would the creditors of such a banker say? If they were not cruel, obdu-
rate

rate and foolish, they would say, "it is not for your interest, nor for ours, to distress you; cash we know cannot be found immediately, we see your funds are quite sufficient to answer our claims, and therefore we will give you time." Precisely so was the case with respect to the Bank; every person who took a Bank note knew very well that the Bank was not in a situation to give cash for every Bank note, supposing every one to be presented for payment in cash at one time; and this to a certain extent had been the case, in the instance which created the necessity of the bill which was now before the Committee. It might arise from an alarm, well or ill-founded, political or otherwise; for he was not now going to discuss the cause of the late run upon the Bank; but surely it could not be expected in such a case, that the Bank could pay in cash all the demands that were thus made upon it, any more than a private individual would be able to do, in the case which he had already stated. At no time was any public body of a commercial kind ever able to do so. What should the House of Commons do in such a case? Why, in his opinion, precisely what the House of Commons did; they enquired into the solidity of the Bank, and to the satisfaction of the public verified the fact, that the Bank was abundantly wealthy. But the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Fox) had observed, that the value of Bank notes had always consisted in the consciousness that they were at the will of the holder convertible into money.—He admitted it. But then the right honourable gentleman should recollect, that there was a great difference between the case of any banker or private individual, and that of the Bank of England, even in the facility of turning their property into specie. This would be obvious to any gentleman who would consider the nature of the Bank of England. It would immediately appear that the property of the Bank was not convertible into specie without much time. It was impossible from the nature of the thing. The public never sufficiently understood this matter, and it was the duty of the House that day, as the representatives of the people, to stem the torrent of popular prejudice upon this matter and to allow the Bank a reasonable time to get out of the difficulty with which it was now unfortunately, and he believed, unavoidably embarrassed. The people ought not to be deluded, and he thought if they looked at this matter with the patience and good sense which were their characteristic, they would meet this embarrassment with firmness. He flattered him-

self that they would do so. And he hoped that they would see the necessity that this Bill should be carried into effect.

Mr. *Fox* wished the statement of the learned Gentleman who spoke last to be attended to. He seemed to be of opinion that if the Bank stopped payment under certain circumstances, they should not be stigmatised with the charge of having broken their faith, provided it appeared that the failure was unavoidable. In that statement he agreed with the learned Gentleman. He agreed with him also in his statement of the possible case of a private banker, that if all his creditors came upon him at once, and demanded payment in cash, that he could not possibly comply with such demands, and that their forbearance would be laudable; nay, that if they refused to forbear, and availed themselves of all the rigour which they could enforce by law, that they would act with cruelty, and with folly. But the learned Gentleman omitted one material distinction between the private banker and that of the Bank of England in this case. If a private banker was in the hands of creditors whom he could not pay, he could not defend himself by law at any time when his creditors chused to call upon him for payment of their demands. He must satisfy them when they should think fit to call upon him; and therefore they were likely to see their interest in having a tender regard for his. But was this the case with the Bank of England at this moment, or would it be so after this Bill was carried? By no means; for by this Bill the Bank of England were to be indemnified against the effect of having refused to pay their debts. And that which would be punishable by law as a breach of faith in a private banker, would not be punishable in the Bank of England. The one you could compel, the other you could not compel, to fulfil an engagement; and therefore there was a material defect in the comparison. But the learned Gentleman seemed to convey to the Committee an idea that the Bank would have specie enough in a certain time. Upon that part of the subject he begged he might not be misunderstood in what he was going to say. He was not stating that evils might not result to our trade and commerce if the restriction should not be continued; he was taking the subject upon the reasoning of the learned Gentleman. He was not saying that great evils might not arise from the contraction of discounts, and that many inconveniencies might not arise to the State itself if that species of accommodation was not afforded to commercial men; but he intended to apply his observations chiefly to the duration of this restriction upon the Bank not to pay in specie. He could not conceive that, if
there

there was a disproportion at this moment between specie and paper, the issue of a greater quantity of paper, and continuing that practice for a great length of time, would diminish the evil. He knew not what arguments had prevailed on gentlemen out of doors to believe that doctrine, as some of them seemed by their speeches to have been so persuaded, he was sure that nothing to that effect had been proved in that House. Suppose Government were to pay him a debt in specie, that was to say, in bad guineas of the value only of nineteen shillings each: why, then, for these bad guineas he would get nineteen shillings at any time, and therefore they would have a fixed value, so that he should know the amount of his loss. But if the paper of the Bank should be depreciated, he could never be able to ascertain that loss, because it might vary from day to day. Gold and silver, although in the state he had mentioned, was always of some value, because they were marketable, but paper might be reduced to a state that might render it of none; and therefore no comparison could ever be made between the precious metals and paper in a state of depreciation. He could not help wishing, that gentlemen, instead of amusing us with new terms of circulating medium, and the like, had shewn us an instance, ancient or modern, in which paper, when forced into circulation by the authority of the State, had been received in the same manner as gold and silver. The thing was impossible, for the value of paper had always been, and must always be, dependent on the possibility of converting it into silver and gold. Such had been the essence of the value of paper, and what ground had we for supposing that it would have a different effect with us from the rest of the world? He agreed with the honourable baronet (Sir W. Pulteney), that necessity was imperious, and could not be resisted; and agreed with him also, that the duration of this Bill should be a short one. He was sure if it was not short, and that we were to rest on the provisions of the Bill, without shewing to the public how much Parliament felt for the present lamentable situation of the country, they would soon disgust the public with their proceedings. It would not do from day to day to postpone the consideration of the subject. He knew not what the duration of the Bill was intended to be, whether for three weeks, or three or six months; but this he knew, that the longer was the duration, the greater our difficulty would be; and he must be a sanguine man, indeed, if he thought the country would not be ruined in its credit if this Bill continued for six or eight months. There were some persons who confessed that this evil could not be removed during

the war. He agreed with them; but he doubted whether it could be removed even in peace, unless that desirable event should take place very soon. Every hour that it was delayed diminished our chance of removing the calamity. If we had not peace in the spring of 1797, what should we say in the autumn? This was a question which did not depend on the taking of a town or a fortress. An enumeration of many successes in that respect would be of no avail, supposing us to have them. This was a time in which we should not conceal any thing from the public. If the loan of 30 or 40 millions more should be had, it would not improve the situation of the paper credit in comparison with specie. He could not bring himself to state the situation of this country without the most painful anxiety. The House ought to consider that this country was now on the brink of a dreadful precipice, and that one false step might throw it into a gulph, out of which it could never rise.

Sir *W. Pullen* said, that he was aware the present proceeding was entirely wrong. He knew a plan, and he did not speak without consideration, whereby the whole of this difficulty might be removed in the space of a month. He reminded the House, that in Portugal a man who possessed influence with the Crown might have a protection against his creditors, and might be enabled to defraud them of their debts; but he had not heard that such a facility to get rid of demands had been serviceable to the trade of Portugal. He believed the same observation to be applicable to this case. Indeed he believed it would end, as all such plans had ended, in the destruction of those who had formed it.

The *Attorney General* briefly replied.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that while all cordially united in lamenting the necessity of the measure which was then submitted to the consideration of the Committee, there could exist no difficulty in any gentleman expressing his sincere wish that it would continue but a very short time: yet, however sanguine the hopes of gentlemen were on the subject, the Committee could not exactly say what precise and limited time it would be proper or wise to confine it to. The causes which had produced the necessity of restricting the payments of the Bank in cash could not be done away in a stated period. It was at the same time necessary to look the situation of the country in the face, and to call forth the national vigour. As the best and safest mode of judging, the House had appointed a Committee, and invested them with powers to examine into the state of the finances, to enquire into the sources of the
country,

country, and having thus ascertained the origin of temporary distress and embarrassment, the next step would naturally be, to bring forward proper remedies. They were then proceeding in their discussion of the subjects referred to them; they were forming grounds which were to constitute important subjects of consideration for the House; and the country was anxiously waiting the event of their enquiries. But gentlemen were not now called on to enter into an investigation of the causes that had produced the necessity of the Order issued by his Majesty's Council, it was merely proposed to adopt a remedy which might provide against temporary distress. He was ready to admit that, after the report of the Committee had been brought up, an irresistible call would be made on the House to enter fully into the subject matter of the report, and to adopt such measures as might be found adequate to meet, not only the present embarrassment, but any future crisis. But he did not see that any specific plan for that purpose could be pursued until the report of the Committee was fully before the House. It was evident that, until that time, no permanent remedy could be proposed at once to counteract the pressure of the moment, to improve the future prospects of the country, and to steer it successfully through all its difficulties. He should at the same time observe, that it was a delicate matter for any man to state, with any degree of confidence, the precise time for limiting the intended restriction on the Bank, for it was impossible to see the exact period at which the necessity would cease to require a continuance of it. However earnest, however sanguine, the wishes of gentlemen were to that point, a cause which had produced so great an effect could not certainly be removed in so short a time as their desires urged them to expect. He should only remark, that a limited time would best come under consideration when that question was properly brought forward. He would then content himself with observing, in a general manner, that a limitation of three months seemed advisable, and that the 24th of June appeared a proper period. Yet he did not mention that to the Committee as a precise and settled time for the duration of the measure. An honourable Baronet had assured gentlemen that he was in possession of a certain method to remove the restriction in one month, but had not thought proper to disclose the particular measures which were to accomplish that great and desirable end. If he, or any other gentleman, was seriously acquainted with such a plan as he suggested, he would render one of the most important services ever conferred on his country. In the task of considering the state of the country, it would be necessary to compare
what

what should be the proportion of cash to the proportion of paper. It would be requisite to draw a general description of the situation in which the House might wish to see the Bank of England placed. The remedy could not take place in an instantaneous manner, but would naturally be the result of gradual investigation and progressive improvement. With respect to the propositions thrown out of reducing the amount of notes in circulation, it was a subject on which he had not been able to form any judgment. But when he reviewed the arguments adduced by a right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox), a sudden diminution of the circulating medium decisively appeared to be the result of them. As so much had been said on the nature of a circulating medium, he thought it necessary to notice, that he did not, for his own part, take it to be of that empirical kind which had been generally described. It appeared to him to consist in any thing that answered the great purposes of trade and commerce, whether in specie, paper, or any other term that might be used. The right honourable Gentleman admitted, that a sudden diminution of the circulating medium would destroy the whole commerce of the country. But he also appeared to have stated, that if the effects of the Bank were converted into cash, and the claims of the public creditors satisfied, that then the House would put themselves in the situation of keeping their faith. "But that position (said Mr. Pitt) I positively deny. The best and most effectual way to keep our faith cannot be separated from the commerce, from the manufactures, and the activity of the country. It is, Sir, by preserving these, that we can alone give energy to public credit. It is by giving stability to the Bank, in a manner directly opposite to that proposed by the right honourable Gentleman, that we can alone give life to trade, draw into circulation the specie hoarded up at home, and bring back the money which has been remitted to foreign countries. On such a conduct depends the real security of the public creditors, and not on the measure suggested of converting into cash the assets of the Bank, which, however temporary in its relief, would ultimately plunge the nation in the deepest distress, and completely ruin the credit of the country. The right honourable Gentleman might as well argue, that to destroy the source and means of commerce would restore credit, and remove every difficulty. Such a proceeding would, indeed, make an incurable and perpetual wound in our dearest interests. But, Sir, that is not all: the right honourable Gentleman's plan looks to the reduction of paper, but not to the increase of specie; and how would the nation be bettered by

by it? The outstanding debts of the Bank might, I grant, be paid by it; but it totally deprives the public creditor of any chance in our future prosperity: for the Bank would just have enough to discharge the claims which might be brought against it, and we should necessarily be left without any resource to which our commerce, our manufactures, or the spirit of national enterprize, could look for support, vigour, and extension. It does not, therefore, seem to me to be the true road for us to pursue, in endeavouring to maintain the activity of our internal traffic, and the success of our external commercial designs, with which public credit is so materially connected. We should hope that by encouraging them, in adopting means consistent with their support, we have the best and truest chance of bringing specie and bullion into the Bank, and restoring to the country the full circulation of money."

Mr. Pitt declared, that he considered a prudent increase of Bank notes, at the present moment, as the most effectual means to produce essential benefit, and which could easily be reduced at a future period: that was the most rational way of shortening the duration of the necessity. Yet if any gentleman could come forward and state to the Committee a better plan, it would certainly form the subject of the most adviseable and important discussion, and he would gladly give his assent to it. The House, in viewing the nature of the measure proposed, and its various relations, were to consider themselves as the representatives of the people of England, and should act for their interests: and he trusted that they would not be too sanguine in their expectations, by fixing in their own minds a shorter period for the duration of the restriction than he had mentioned. He was convinced that he had troubled the Committee on topics which were unconnected with the question before them; but he thought it necessary to advert to them, in consequence of the way in which they had been introduced, and the stress which had been laid on them.

Mr. Fox said, that some assertions of the right honourable Gentleman made it necessary for him to say a few words. He had no particular objection to the use of the term "circulating medium," except that he preferred old terms to new. But he must aver, that the doctrine of the right honourable Gentleman was fundamentally erroneous, and must be erroneous if the first and eternal principles by which all circulation was governed were true. According to his doctrine, it would be the surest way of putting an end to the present dilemma, if paper were to be extended beyond the proportion of specie, rather than diminished; and by this, he speciously said, that commerce

merce was to be maintained, industry promoted, and all the sources of our wealth to be fed. It was not a declamation, however shewy, that would change the everlasting nature of things. Suppose that, on a basis of one million of specie, there was an issue of only one million of notes, would it be a question, That these notes would not be in more estimation, than if it were known that two, three, or more millions, were to be issued? According to the right honourable Gentleman, however, notes were to be valuable in proportion to their quantity, and as they exceeded the solidity of the foundation upon which they were issued; a proposition which must be false, if the principles of credit be true. In talking of a circulating medium, gentlemen got into errors, by supposing that paper was a circulating medium. It was no such thing. The circulating medium was the precious metals, and the paper that used so freely to circulate flowed from credit, from the opinion that the public had of the facility and certainty with which that paper could be converted into the precious metals. In case of barter the precious metals were taken as a circulating medium, in preference to any thing else, as being a material of substantial value in all countries, and upon which there was a general convention of mankind; but to substitute paper as a circulating medium, required that it should either be done by convention or by force. If by convention of any part of the kingdom, it still does nothing, because the rest of the world are not parties to your convention, nor subject to your laws; and if done by force, you must incur the penalties which a forced circulation of paper has brought upon every country which had adopted the expedient. The use of paper then must be always secondary to the precious metals, must flow from credit, and credit must in its nature arise out of the opinion that the paper was issued in due and discreet proportion to the fund of specie. But to say that paper differed from the nature of every thing else, and that it was valuable in proportion as it was plentiful, and not as it was rare; that the abundance of paper would incline people not to hoard guineas, but would induce them to carry them to the Bank; were propositions so inconsistent with sound reasoning, that he was ashamed of calling up principles so merely elementary, and which were as clear as the simplest propositions of mathematics.

Sir *John Sinclair* said, that he was inclined to give credit to the honourable Baronet, when he declared he was possessed of a plan that would remove the restriction in the course of one month. He thought proper to ask the right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) what means he proposed for the relief of
other

other great bodies, with respect to their creditors—such, for instance, as the East-India House, and the South Sea House? He was of opinion, that the hon. baronet's plan was well entitled to the consideration of a Committee.

Mr. *Wilberforce* expressed both his surprize and hope at the motion made by the honourable baronet, of the plan with which he professed himself acquainted, that would remove in the course of one month the necessity of continuing the restriction on the Bank; and he sincerely trusted the hon. baronet would not send gentlemen away that night without giving them some kind of a sketch of what related so nearly to the prosperity of the country. He maintained that the commerce of the country would be deeply affected by any reduction of the notes of the Bank of England, and was decidedly of opinion, that the present embarrassment arose in a very great measure from the vast increase of trade, and from the credit which the merchants and manufacturers of England were in the habit of giving, beyond the practice of any other commercial people.

Sir *Wm. Pulteney* professed himself no enthusiast, but a plain matter of fact man. What he had advanced with respect to the plan he had mentioned was founded on good and certain information. The honourable gentleman wished to treat the plan in a facetious manner, and was desirous to know what it was. He should therefore answer, whatever it was, it appeared necessary that the bill before the Committee should pass, and his plan come after the bill. Were he consequently to thrust in his plan, he should consider himself as treating the House in an improper manner. He was not however confident that what he had to propose was a secret to other gentlemen. He then replied at some length to Mr. *Wilberforce*, and maintained that the Bank should be considered as a monopoly, than which nothing worse could be imagined in a commercial country.

Sir *John Sinclair* said, it was not without foundation that the hon. baronet appeared to state, that he was in possession of a plan to remove the suspension, as, he assured the House, he was himself acquainted with measures, which, he trusted, would produce the same beneficial effect as that proposed by the hon. baronet. They were contained in the papers he then held in his hand, but which, though he was ready to disclose, he would not then trouble the Committee with, fatigued as they were with business, and on account of the lateness of the hour.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, he by no means intended any sarcasm on the worthy baronets.

Sir *Benjamin Hammet* said, there had been no satisfactory answer to the observation, that the Bank ought to have the power to pay whenever they thought proper.

The question on the first clause was now called.

Mr. *Fox* said that he should at the proper time move to introduce a proviso to restrain the Bank from making any advances to Government, either in paper or specie, during the existence of the suspension.

The clause with the Amendments was adopted.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved to report progress, and the Committee was adjourned to Friday.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, *March 23.*

LAW OF DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

The Earl of *Moir* said, from the assurance given him, that the Lord Chancellor was expected to be able to attend on Monday, he should postpone his intended motion on this subject, till Monday next.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* repeated shortly and summarily the substance of the many arguments he had at different times urged to their Lordships, to prove the cogent necessity of the introduction of economical reform in a variety of public offices, where abuse was notoriously prevalent to an enormous degree. He gave the reports of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, as an authority on which he chiefly rested, and on that ground, moved, that the appendix to the report of the Commissioners for examining the public accounts be printed. His motive he said, was to shew their Lordships the retrenchments which might beneficially be made. He was drawn to this from what he understood to have fallen from a gentleman who ought then to be sitting at the table, as clerk of that House, an office which had most unaccountably been converted into a sinecure; and not only that, but he understood, the person in question had said in another place that he had received the appointment in consequence of an address of that House. He knew of no such address; and he believed there was no such address extant. The worthy gentleman had also said, if he might trust to the report in the newspapers, that he considered his place to be as much his property as the Duke of Bedford did his estate. Was such

such an assertion in a moment of public exigency and public distress, to be borne with patience? The Duke of Bedford's property! Was any man in office to presume to put a sinecure, the child of gross abuse, an office never meant to be out of actual practice, and to be held as a mere means of income for service not performed, in competition with the hereditary landed property of the noble Duke, of himself, or any man of hereditary estate in the kingdom? The idea was too monstrous to be submitted to for a single moment.

Lord *Grenville* opposed the printing of the appendix on the score of expence. He could not reply to observations made on what was reported of the speeches of the other House of Parliament; but this he would say, that he who should set up distinctions with regard to the security of property, would begin an attack upon all property whatever.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, in answer to this observation, that of late years few important papers had been refused to be printed on account of the expence. It was generally deemed enough that the importance of the subject warranted the expence. With regard to what had fallen from the noble Secretary of State, an attempt to set up grants of sinecures, made for corruption and influence, undeserved by the persons who possessed them, and which were not merely burthenfome but injurious to the people, and rank them on a level of security with the landed property, and the private goods of men, was an attempt calculated to breed discontent and ill humour, to alienate the hearts of men, and to rouse them to enquiries that would be dangerous to the State.

The motion was negatived.

MOTION FOR PEACE.

The order of the day for their Lordships to be summoned having been read,

The Earl of *Oxford* rose, and thus addressed the House. I rise, my Lords, in consequence of the notice I gave you of my intended motion for Peace with the French Republic. I could have wished that a subject of such national importance had fallen into abler hands; but in the present perilous situation of the country, I could no longer delay offering my sentiments to your Lordships, and discharging my duty to my country; and I call upon every independent man that hears me now to come forward, and exert his utmost ability to save the country, and restore it to that prosperity which

was the pride and boast of every Englishman. My Lords, the argument which Ministers have employed to delude the country, and induce your Lordships to persist in this wicked and ruinous contest, is, that the enemy is not disposed to peace, and that we have, therefore, no alternative but to prosecute the war.

My Lords, I have read, with all the attention in my power, the papers upon your Lordships' table respecting the late negotiation, and I declare, upon my honour, that from those papers I draw a conclusion perfectly different; namely, that the French Directory is disposed to peace; and if your Lordships will give me leave, I will read a few passages from those papers, upon which I have founded my opinion.

My Lords, in the note No. 2, transmitted to Mr. Wickham by Mr. Barthelemi, there is this passage:

"The Directory ardently desires to procure for the French Republic a just, honourable, and solid peace. The step taken by Mr. Wickham would have afforded to the Directory a real satisfaction, if the declaration itself which that Minister makes, of his not having any order, any power to negotiate, did not give room to doubt of the sincerity of the pacific intentions of his court. In fact, if it was true that England began to know her real interest, that she wished to open again for herself the sources of abundance and prosperity; if she sought for peace with good faith, would she propose a congress, of which the necessary result must be, to render all negotiation endless? Or, would she confine herself to the asking in a vague manner that the French Government should point out any other way whatever for attaining the same object—that of a general pacification?"

Again, my Lords, No. 7, extract from the Register of the Decrees of the Executive Directory.

"The Executive Directory, upon consideration of the note addressed to the Minister for foreign affairs by Lord Grenville, dated Westminster, Sept. 14, 1796, wishing to give a proof of the desire which it entertains to make peace with England, decrees as follows:—The Minister for foreign affairs is charged to deliver the necessary passports to the envoy of England, who shall be furnished with full powers, not only for preparing and negotiating the peace between the French Republic and that power, but for concluding it definitively between them."

And again, my Lords, No. 15—

"The Executive Directory sees with pain, that at the moment when it had reason to hope for the speedy return of peace between the French Republic and his Britannic Majesty, the proposal of Lord Malmesbury offers nothing but dilatory, or very distant means of bringing the negotiation to a conclusion.

"Nevertheless the Executive Directory, animated with an ardent desire of putting a stop to the scourge of war, and to prove that they will not reject any means of reconciliation, declare, that as soon as Lord Malmesbury shall exhibit to the Minister for foreign affairs, sufficient powers from the allies of Great Britain, for stipulating for their respective interests, accompanied by a promise on their part to subscribe to whatever shall be concluded in their names, the Executive Directory will hasten to give an answer to the specific propositions which shall be submitted to them, and that the difficulties shall be removed, as far as may be consistent with the safety and dignity of the French Republic."

And,

And, my Lords, after being irritated at Lord Malmesbury's being obliged to send for fresh instructions upon almost every point (a thing I believe very unusual, if not unprecedented in the history of diplomatic transactions), and being still more irritated at his insisting upon those terms which they had before declared they never would treat upon, the Directory in the last note says,

"The undersigned declares moreover, in the name of the Executive Directory, that if the British Cabinet is desirous of peace, the Executive Directory is ready to follow the negotiations, according to the basis laid down in the present note, by the reciprocal channel of couriers."

My Lords, my conclusion from all this is, that the Directory is disposed to peace, but that it is determined to keep the Rhine for the boundary of France; and, my Lords, it has power to do it, and you have not the power to prevent it. You must, therefore, either make peace upon these terms, or persist in the war, which is certain ruin. I therefore move your Lordships,

"That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, humbly to represent to his Majesty, that in the present most critical and alarming situation of the country, this House holds it to be its bounden duty to apprise his Majesty of his own danger, and the ruin and confusion which threaten the whole nation.

"That the shock which has been lately given to public credit, must, from the peculiar nature of our commercial system, deprive us of those means whereby we were enabled to hold so high a rank among the nations of the world; unless the country is speedily relieved from the present enormous expenditure, and its future prosperity ensured by an immediate, sincere, and lasting peace.

"That the House begs leave humbly to represent to his Majesty, that upon a considerate and impartial review of the whole of the late negotiation, this House sees with concern, that the negotiation was broken off by the conduct and demands of his Majesty's Ministers, and not by a want of disposition for peace on the part of France.

"That in answer to the impolitic note delivered by Mr. Wickham, the Executive Directory declare, that "yielding to the ardent desire by which it is animated to procure peace for the French Republic, and for all nations, it will not fear to declare itself openly. Charged by the constitution with the execution of the laws, it cannot make or listen to any proposal that would be contrary to them. The constitutional act does not permit it to consent to any alienation of that, which, according to the existing laws, constitutes the territory of the Republic."

"That it is impossible his Majesty's Ministers could have misunderstood this declaration, for in the note signed Downing-street, there are these words: "To a demand such as this is added an expressed declaration that no proposal contrary to it will be made, or even listened to."

"That six months after this his Majesty's Ministers again made overtures of
peace,

peace, but in so ungracious a manner that doubts might have been reasonably entertained of their sincerity, and after a variety of trifling disputes, unworthy a great nation, when the happiness of millions was depending, his Majesty's Ministers demanded and made as their *sine qua non*, these very terms which, before they began their negotiation, they knew would not be made, or even listened to.

"That, under all these circumstances this House humbly and most earnestly entreats his Majesty to enter into an immediate negotiation, upon such terms as France is likely to listen and accede to, and in such manner, and through the medium of such men as shall leave no room to doubt the pacific intentions of his Majesty.

"And this House begs leave humbly to assure his Majesty, that it entertains no doubt of the success of such a negotiation, and that it feels confident that after his Majesty shall have been graciously pleased to restore to his people the blessing of peace, such retrenchments and wise regulations may be adopted by the legislature as will relieve the people from their burthens, remove every cause of complaint of their being unequally represented, restore to them their ancient, venerable, and free constitution, and thereby re-establish public spirit and public confidence, and ensure to his Majesty the affections of his subjects, the glory, prosperity, and happiness of his future reign."

Lord *Grenville* said that the only answer which he thought it necessary to give to the motion of the noble Earl was to desire the clerk to read the Address which the House had agreed to on the 30th December last, in answer to his Majesty's message announcing the issue of Lord Malmesbury's negotiation. [The address was read accordingly,] and his Lordship said, he could not imagine those noble Lords who did him the honour to concur with him in that address, had already changed their opinions.

The Duke of *Norfolk* said, that Ministers had reduced the country and themselves to such a situation, that they could not make peace with honour and advantage to the country, and this might be the reason why they were unwilling to enter into a discussion on the present question. The noble Secretary thinks the address of the House on the 30th of December, is a complete answer to the present motion, but he with others differed from him on that point. It was unfortunately true that the House had voted the address, just read on the 30th of December, but it did not follow that the House should not again consider the opinion it then gave, and even change it, if that were thought a wise measure. It is not unbecoming a great assembly to reconsider their proceedings, and repair their errors; and even admitting that the House was right on the 30th of December, it did not follow, that they would now be right in adhering to the
opinion

opinion they then gave, the situation of things, having altered very much since that period:—since that period the French had completely reduced Italy, of which it might have been, then, thought they had but a precarious possession: since that period an event still more unfortunate had taken place; the Bank of England had stopped payment, and our means of carrying on the war, had received as severe a shock as the Emperor's hopes of success. No one could blame Lord Malmesbury for his conduct in the negotiation. He had done every thing that could have been expected of him, but he went to Paris so shackled, that it was out of his power to bring about any happy conclusion of his mission. The question respecting Belgium should have been decided in the first instance, and then the negotiation would not have been protracted to such an unnecessary length; but his Grace suspected it was designedly protracted, to give time and opportunity for Ministers to play off those tricks and intrigues, by which all their conduct was marked. His Grace compared the situation in which Ministers might have negotiated, when the allies were at the gates of Valenciennes; with the situation in which they negotiated in October 1796, when the French were far advanced into Germany, and in Italy their arms were victorious. Had Ministers negotiated when the allies were at Valenciennes, Belgium might not only have been restored to the Emperor, but very advantageous terms of peace might have been obtained. Our situation was now indeed most lamentably altered, and if Ministers proceeded in the war it would still grow worse. There was no hope of restoring Belgium to the Emperor. The French had gained it by conquest, and by the right of conquest they held it. They held it by the same right by which we kept possession of the cape of Good Hope, and they had a right to insist on retaining it, if they thought proper. His Grace thought the present question ought to have a full and fair consideration. The public wished for peace, and it was the duty of the House to make every effort to obtain it. The people had lost all confidence in the Ministers, both in their pacific professions, and their talents for carrying on the war, for with the exceptions of our soldiers and sailors, who had displayed the greatest bravery, and added honour to our natural character; with the exception of their exertions, the history of this war was a disgrace to the country; it certainly was a disgrace to the Ministers who had conducted it. In the war during
Lord

Lord Chatham's Administration, the people readily bore the necessary burthens, because if the expence was great, so were our triumphs. Every month brought the news of the conquest of some Island or province ; but now no such happy tidings reached this country ; unless indeed the conquest of St. Domingo could be called happy, a fact which he would deny, as it was only a grave for our brave soldiers. Those who might have had confidence in the abilities of Ministers before, might now have had substantial reason for withdrawing it. He thought the motion of the noble Earl did honour to his independence and his ability ; and he was happy to see young men unconnected with party come forward in this virtuous manner to endeavour to restore us to the happiness which the infatuation and incapacity of Ministers had so unhappily destroyed.

Lord *Douglas* (Earl of *Moreton*) asked, on what grounds it was expected that the House should act so inconsistent with itself, as to reverse its former opinions, adopt an address so diametrically opposite to the one which had been presented so late as December last, and withdraw that confidence in his Majesty's Ministers which they had already given them ; and upon what principle could it be inferred, that France was now more sincerely disposed to treat for peace than it had discovered in December last ? Could any noble Lord imagine that the House would turn short round, and act with the most glaring inconsistency, or stoop so low as to sue for peace from the French Directory ?

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, he lamented to see a motion of such importance passed over in the hasty and shuffling way in which the Ministers seemed inclined to treat it. What, a reference to the 30th of December, as if that were an answer ! That address, to say no more of it, was hurried through the House with most indecent haste. Time had not been given to noble Lords at any distance to come to attend it. He, for one, was prevented from attending. Surely he was not considered as implicated by that address so obtained, nor ought any noble Lord to be so considered from the extraordinary change of circumstances that had since taken place. He called upon the House to think of the new situation of the country, as well as of the situation of France. Surely after the measures of distress which we had lately been obliged to recur to, it could not be said that we ought to adhere to the determination of the 30th of December, or of any former period. What was the situation ? Every moment

ment increased our difficulties, and every moment of delay would increase them. It was idle to hesitate, after the shock which had been given to public credit, to talk of half-measures. Nothing short of making Bank notes a legal tender, with all the calamities incident to the measure, could be effectual. The Minister must know it; however he might coquet on the occasion, it must come to that; he only waited perhaps to have the call from the public. If so, notwithstanding that the remedy was a terrible evil, still the rapidity of the disease required it. Difficult and dangerous therefore as the measure was to a dreadful degree, he was ready for one to make the call, and to take his share of the responsibility. That alone could give us time to look about us, to have recourse to the most rigid œconomy, to retrench from the smallest fee up to the highest emolument, to cut the skirts of every office, and to save in every department. How was this to be done except by peace? "He did not *ambition* the making of that peace." God knew Ministers had reduced the country to a situation as not to make office enviable to any man; at the same time he did not despair of the country. It was said of a cat that she had nine lives; he hoped an island had twenty. The fact was, that Ministers were averse to peace, they did not like it, and therefore could find little or no argument against it. He had often observed that a little child, when it did not like to do a particular thing, would find a hundred excuses for avoiding it, without assigning its true motive. It would pretend, it did not understand what it was ordered to do, and he had more than once heard a child acknowledge afterwards, that it did know, what it was told to do, but did not like to do it. Why then might not modern statesmen and modern Ministers find a thousand excuses for not doing, what they did not like to set about in earnest. They might say they did not know how to go about attaining peace. If so, he would tell them it was their duty to know how to go about it. It was their business to set about efficient, practicable, conciliatory terms of negotiation. With regard to Lord Malmesbury's conduct in the late negotiation, it might be honourable, it might be laudable, it might be very much the reverse. It was impossible for him, and impossible for their Lordships to decide upon it. They had not proper materials, they had not full information to enable them to form a fair judgment upon it. A part only of the necessary papers were upon their table.

The whole of the correspondence, all the letters, and the instructions furnished him from time to time were not before the House. When an answer to a letter only was shewn him, and not the letter that occasioned that answer, how was it possible for him to know, whether the writer of the answer was in the right or not. He must think therefore from the imperfect state of the papers on the table relative to the late negociation, that Ministers put them on the table, with a view to mislead, and not to inform. If it was clearly to appear from documents, that the fault rested with the enemy, this would serve to unite the hearts and hands of the people of this country. If France were indeed a magnanimous nation it would not venture to insult this country by a mock treaty, but if it did, every heart would unite in opposition to it. He even doubted whether peace could restore the credit of the country; but it was the thing, of all others the most likely to restore it; and therefore he wished to see Ministers set about the work in earnest. They always found excuses for putting it off, and nothing was more easy than to find excuses. He could not doubt that such able Ministers could always find a thousand excuses for continuing the war. Peace he sincerely wished for, and he did not care who made it. The present Ministers could not, indeed, make peace with honour to themselves, they must submit to contradict and disavow their own principles, to confess their error and feel shame; but that was their affair. Sometimes it was asked, how shall we make peace? To this he would answer, if Ministers did not know how to make peace, they should resign their situations.

Lord *Boringdon* objected to the motion. He saw no reason to distrust the sincerity of Ministers, or to doubt of their wishes for peace. To agree to this motion would only expose an over eagerness for peace, which would retard the thing. It would be a confession of our distresses, and would lay open the weakness of the country in a way in which the French would not fail to take advantage. Every thing that could be done by moderation, address, and ability, had been tried by Lord Malmesbury. What strengthened this opinion was, the letter written by the Danish Ambassador at Paris, who might be considered as giving an impartial judgment, and the House had sufficiently manifested their sense of Lord Malmesbury's merit in conducting the negotiation in the address they had agreed to on the 30th of December, to
which

which the House undoubtedly ought in consistency to adhere, unless new circumstances could be fairly exhibited as grounds for changing their opinion; nor could he at all approve of the wording of the motion, which seemed more like extracts from the minutes of the Executive Directory, then corresponding with the language of the British House of Peers.

The Earl of *Guildford* said, that according to the arguments used that night for not agreeing to the noble Earl's motion, they were to collect that his Majesty's Ministers still pertinaciously adhered to the opinion which they had held on the 30th of December, and the public were therefore to understand that they were resolved not to enter upon any negotiation for a peace which should not make the surrender of Belgium a *sine qua non*, and they called upon the House to support them in that determination. He who had through the whole war questioned the sincerity of their intentions in their endeavours to make peace, must own that they were consistent in calling upon the House to act upon the address which they had obtained on the 30th of December, since they had thereby secured themselves from the means of negotiating any attainable peace. They had shut the door against it, and it was a truth that ought to be deeply impressed on every heart, that Ministers hereby declared, and called upon the House to declare, that they would not enter into negotiation for any peace that they were likely to obtain. He must therefore vote for the motion, being convinced that till Ministry were compelled to make peace, that peace would not take place.

Earl *Spencer* said the noble Earl, by reference to the papers, and particularly to the letter of Lord Malmesbury addressed to Lord Grenville, would find that the noble Ambassador had expressly said to M. de la Croix, that he was ready to hear any *contre-projet* that he might have to propose. It was clear then that his Majesty's Ministers had not shut the door to all peace by an *ultimatum* which they knew would not be granted, and that therefore the noble Earl's assertion, that they were resolved not to try to pursue any attainable plan of peace, was not founded on the documents. He said, he must object to the present motion, on the ground that it would hold out to France and to Europe, that this country was so reduced as to have no other alternative than to make peace on any terms.

The Earl of *Guildford* replied, that the noble Earl would find, if he looked again into the letter of Lord Malmesbury, that though he desired M. de la Croix to suggest a *contre-projet*, he had expressly made the surrender of Belgium a *sine qua non*. Now if he understood diplomatic language, in which, however, he did not profess to be an adept, *sine qua non* was synonymously an *ultimatum*.

The Earl of *Oxford* rose to reply and said, my Lords, the only intelligible argument which has been made against my motion is, that it is calculated to expose the distresses of the country to the enemy. I demand whether my motion is likely to do this in any comparison with the Order of the Council, which the Ministers have recently issued, and the sentence they have thereby passed against our credit as a nation?

My Lords, all that has been said against my motion, so far from shaking my opinions, confirm me in the necessity of the measure I have had the honour to advise. My Lords, I must not be told that this address is improper to be carried to the Throne, when, there is not a sentiment in it that I have not taken from the very words of his Majesty; the best reply, therefore, that I can make, will be to read to your Lordships a few passages from his Majesty's most gracious, grand, and admirable speech at the close of the American war.

“ My Lords and Gentlemen,

“ Since the close of the last session, I have employed my whole time in the care and attention which the important and critical conjuncture of public affairs required of me.

“ I lost no time in giving the necessary orders to prohibit the further prosecution of offensive war upon the continent of North America, adopting, as my inclination will always lead me to do, with decision and effect, whatever I collect to be the sense of my Parliament and my people; I have pointed all my views and measures, as well in Europe as in North America, to an entire and cordial reconciliation with those colonies.

“ Finding it indispensable to the attainment of this object, I did not hesitate to go the full length of the powers vested in me, and offered to declare them free and independent States, by an article to be inserted in the treaty of peace. Provisional articles are agreed upon, to take effect whenever terms of peace shall be finally settled with the Court of France.

“ In thus admitting their separation from the Crown of these kingdoms, I have sacrificed every consideration of my own to the wishes and opinions of my people.”

Here, my Lords, you see his Majesty giving up America, and sacrificing every consideration of his own to the interest of his people, and am I to be told that Belgium is of more importance to England than America?

To

To the House of Commons, his Majesty says—

“ I have endeavoured, by every measure in my power, to diminish the burthens of my people. I lost no time in taking the most decided measures for introducing a better œconomy in the expenditure of the army.

“ I have carried into strict execution the several reductions in my Civil List expences, directed by an act of the last session. I have introduced a further reform into other departments, and suppressed several sinecure places in them. I have, by this means, so regulated my establishment, that my expence shall not in future exceed my income.

“ I must recommend to you an immediate attention to the great objects of the public receipts and expenditure, and above all, to the state of the public debt. Notwithstanding the great increase of it during the war, it is to be hoped that such regulations may be still established, such savings made, and future loans so conducted as to promote the means of its gradual redemption, by a fixed course of payment. I must, with particular earnestness, distinguish, for your serious consideration, that part of the debt which consists of Navy, Ordnance, and Victualling bills: the enormous discount upon some of these bills, shews this mode of payment to be a most ruinous expedient.

“ I have ordered the several estimates, made up as correctly as the present practice admits, to be laid before you. I hope that such farther corrections as may be necessary, will be made before the next year. It is my desire that you should be apprised of every expence before it is incurred, as far as the nature of each service can possibly admit. Matters of account can never be made too public.

“ The regulation of a vast territory in Asia, opens a large field for your wisdom, prudence, and foresight.”

For the fate of India, my Lords, I at this moment tremble. Where is the wisdom, prudence, and foresight of Ministers with respect to that country? India, I fear, will, ere long, be lost to England. My lords, from your blind confidence in Ministers, you will live to see this once vast and glorious Empire fall to pieces in their hands.

“ I trust that you will be able to frame some fundamental laws, which may make their connection with Great Britain a blessing to India; and that you will take therein proper measures to give all foreign nations, in matters of foreign commerce, an entire and perfect confidence in the probity, punctuality, and good order of our government. You may be assured that whatever depends upon me shall be executed with a steadiness, which can alone preserve that part of my dominions, or the commerce which arises from it.

“ It is the fixed object of my heart to make the general good, and the true spirit of the Constitution the invariable rule of my conduct, and on all occasions to advance and reward merit in every profession.

“ To ensure the full advantages of a government conducted on such principles depends on your temper, your wisdom, your disinterestedness, collectively and individually.

“ My people expect these qualifications of you, and I call for them.”

My Lords, this is from the mouth of his Majesty, and is the best reply that I can make to the injurious insinuations against my motion.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, before they proceeded to the question, he must advert to two or three things that had been thrown out that night. The noble Marquis was correctly informed

formed with respect to the indecent haste with which the Address of the House, of the 30th of December, had been obtained. The Duke reminded the noble Secretary of State, that when he brought down the Message, and moved for it to be taken into consideration on the Thursday, he entreated that it might be deferred till Monday, in order that he might have an opportunity of writing to such noble Lords as he knew were gone out of town, and would be desirous of being present at the discussion. Finding that he could not prevail, and obtain a delay till Monday, he had begged the delay of a single day only, and that Friday, instead of Thursday, might be the day. The noble Secretary of State would not, however, give way; though afterwards, finding he could not get the necessary papers printed in time to lay them on the table, so as to give noble Lords an opportunity of examining them by Thursday, he the next day came down, moved to discharge the order, and then moved that Friday should be the day; by which means, in neither case, was there time sufficient for him to write to noble Lords, at a hundred miles distance, with the least chance of their being enabled to come to town so as to be present at the discussion. But under whatever circumstances the Address had been carried, and however deliberately, instead of inconsiderately, adopted, it surely was no argument against reconsideration. There were now circumstances that more powerfully called for the specific interference of the Parliament, for it was only from the specific interference of that and the other House, that they could cherish any hope of forcing Ministers to endeavour to procure for the country the blessing of peace. He had before had occasion to say, and it had been admitted, that to offer terms of peace was not to sue for it. He thought he could make it manifest, by the papers on the table, that Ministers had not sought for it in a way that could either prove to them, or to the people of England, that they were sincere. The noble Duke referred to the correspondence as laid upon the table; and contended, that when they called for a *contre-projet*, they had expressly declared, that the surrender of Belgium was the *sine qua non*; and that might be considered as an *ultimatum* with respect to that particular point. And what more particularly demonstrated the insincerity of Ministers, was, their not investing the Minister with intelligible powers: for fresh instructions he had incessantly occasion to send his couriers; and when called upon to present his terms, he had none to offer, he must first consult his court; and he at length made a *sine qua non* of a matter which they had previously declared they would not concede as a principle. He was glad to see

fee the noble Lord (Malmesbury) in his place, who could contradict the interpretation, if it was wrong. They proved then their insincerity by not adopting an attainable ground, and assuming practicable principles. Now they declared that they adhered to the same terms. In fine, he must make a declaration of a more forcible kind than any that he had ever before made in that House, and for which he knew he should incur much censure. It was, That from the bottom of his heart, and in his conscience, he believed that his Majesty's present Ministers could not negotiate a peace upon terms so good as this nation had a right to expect, and as other persons of more sincerity, and of more capacity, were likely to obtain.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, that when he was young in that House, the doctrine was, that, upon every gracious communication from the Sovereign, no time was to be lost in approaching the throne with an Address of thanks. Were the times so changed as to make their gratitude and loyalty a matter of charge and suspicion? When he was young too, it was a notion, that all men thought peace better than war; and that when suspicions were entertained of the sincerity of Ministers, the reasons of doubt and jealousy were in decency stated. Such was the practice when he was young! He professed, upon his honour, he could not conceive a reason for suspecting the sincerity of Ministers in their wishes for peace. But as to the idea, that the consideration of a Message from his Majesty was to be put off, because noble Lords chose to go out of town, and absent themselves from their duty, he never had before heard of so extraordinary a doctrine broached in Parliament. While the House continued to sit, it was the bounden duty of every noble Lord to attend in his place; and, except in cases of indisposition or some strong necessity, no noble Lord was entitled to be absent, much less to urge a charge on his Majesty's Ministers, or the rest of the House, because they did not agree to an unusual delay, merely to accommodate the convenience of individual Peers.

The Duke of *Bedford* reminded the noble Earl that this memorable Address was voted at a season of the year when Lords were usually in the country, and that before the Message was brought down, it was generally understood that no more business, that was likely to call for much debate, was to come on. Indeed, it was very unusual for the House to sit longer than the 24th of December, previous to the Christmas recess; and therefore, under such circumstances, noble Lords who had gone out of town were surely excusable. Ministers, who must have been aware of the Message being intended

tended to be brought down, ought to have given notice of it, at such a season, a day or two before-hand. Instead of that, as he had before stated, the noble Secretary of State brought it down on a Monday, and named Thursday for the consideration of it. It afterwards was deferred for a single day; but when the Address was voted, there were not more Peers present than the number of creations during the period of the present Administration. With respect to the sincerity of Ministers, if the noble Lord was not convinced from the tenor of the late negociation, he despaired of persuading him.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* rose to explain, and confirmed the statement of the noble Duke, declaring that, when the Message was brought down, he was at one hundred miles distance, and had not expected any important business would have been forward at that season; therefore, although it may not, as the noble Earl had observed, be parliamentary to charge the absence of a Peer as a circumstance of blame in Ministers, their conduct had undoubtedly been questionable respecting the Address, and he should continue to think they had hurried so important a subject with indecent precipitancy. With regard to what had been said by the noble Earl as to the existence of no reason to suspect the sincerity of Ministers, the mere assertion that they had been sincere was no proof of the fact; and he begged leave to remind the noble Earl, that last war he had himself been sent on an embassy of peace to America, and doubts were entertained to this day of the sincerity of that mission.

The Earl of *Coventry*, in a few words, declared, that the House could not agree to the motion of the noble Earl, without being guilty of the grossest inconsistency. He defended the conduct of Lord Malmesbury in the management of the late negociation; denied that he had given in any *ultimatum*, and said, it was obvious that the country would be liable to a state of the most serious risk, and be in a situation of perpetual danger, if the Netherlands were suffered to remain in the hands of France. The Earl said, he was old enough to remember when France was permitted to retain Lorraine and Alsace, which was at the time a matter of great public uneasiness at home and abroad, and the subject of much argument and controversy. How much more then ought the people of this country to be alarmed at the idea of the Austrian Netherlands being suffered to remain in the possession, or even under the influence, of the French.

Lord *Grenville* said, he still thought the Address voted by the House on the 30th of December last was the best and only
answer

answer that ought to be given to the noble Earl's motion. He did not, therefore, rise to take up much of their Lordships' time, but merely to say a very few words to one or two points that had occurred in the course of the debate. A noble Duke, who spoke early (the Duke of Norfolk), had asked why peace had not been treated for when the allies had carried victory before them to the gates of Valenciennes? That question had been answered again and again, viz. because at that time such was the state of things in France, that it was impossible to treat at all; and it was also to be remembered, that Parliament was not sitting at that period of the year. With regard to the late negociation, and the assertion of the noble Duke, that Lord Malmesbury had declared his *ultimatum*, by insisting on the surrender of Belgium, in the Austrian Netherlands, as a *sine qua non*, he did not know in what diplomatic dictionary noble Lords had found that a *sine qua non* was synonymous with an *ultimatum*. In all his researches, as a publicist, he had never found that they were considered as *synonimes*. With respect to the conduct of the noble Lord who was entrusted with the late negociation, he was happy not only to declare that it was most able, most honourable to himself, and most satisfactory to those who appointed him, but he could assert it as a notorious and unquestionable fact, that the conduct of the French Directory in that negociation was loudly censured, not merely in one or two courts on the Continent, but in every corner of Europe, and the conduct of his Majesty, throughout the transaction, as universally approved and applauded. The noble Duke had asserted with great solemnity, and, as he said, for the first time, that his Majesty's Ministers could not make so good a peace as others. Why he had said, that this was the first time, he knew not; for all the tenor of his speeches and motions, for the last four years, was to insinuate the incapacity of Ministers for their situations, and their insincerity. The House, however, thank God, with the exception of four or five Lords, had thought otherways, and he was confident that not only the House, but the kingdom, could not think that the proper persons to make peace were persons agreeable to the enemy. If it was meant that his Majesty's present Ministers were not the persons whom the enemy wish to treat with, he would readily admit the conclusion; and he sincerely hoped they would continue to act so as to preserve their claim to a compliment so honourable to themselves.

The Duke of *Bedford* said, that, unquestionably, he had never before declared that other persons could make a better and a more honourable peace than his Majesty's Ministers. He

was aware of the inferences that might be drawn from the declaration now, but these he must incur. No man, who knew him, would believe that he made it from any personal view to himself. The present was not the moment when any man could covet office.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* said, that the men proper to make peace were not so much the men that the enemy might like, as the men that they could trust. It was not favour that a fair enemy demanded; it was candour. It was an obvious, plain-dealing sincerity that they wanted, and that he believed they could not have in the present Ministers of England.

The Earl of *Warwick* said, he did not mean to intrude on their Lordships' patience but for a few moments. He said, he had not the smallest doubt of the sincerity of Ministers with respect to the late negotiation, which had been conducted with the greatest ability, judgment, and prudence, by the noble Lord who had been sent to negotiate, and who had most eminently distinguished himself on the occasion. His Lordship said, considering the desperate situation of the country, when every heart and hand ought to unite in giving strength to the Executive Government, he lamented extremely that noble Lords, of great weight and great talents, should come down from time to time and make inflammatory speeches, calculated to alarm, terrify, and depress the public mind. He knew, from his own acquaintance with people's opinion in the country, that they were not inclined of themselves to entertain gloomy apprehensions. They were ready and willing, with true British spirit, to exert themselves individually to repel the enemy, if he should dare to attempt an invasion, and to be active in the defence of every part of the kingdom. Such speeches, therefore, as he had alluded to, could not but produce the most mischievous effect, and did more injury to the common cause of the country, than, he believed, those noble Lords who indulged in them could possibly imagine. With regard to himself, he but seldom troubled their Lordships; but, as he was upon his legs, he would take the liberty of declaring, that no man could act upon more independent principles than he did. He gave Ministers his support, because he had the fullest confidence in their abilities, and in their integrity. He saw wisdom and energy in their measures, and should oppose the present motion, because he had not the smallest doubt of the sincerity of Ministers, and believed that they would gladly seize upon every opportunity of making peace on good and honourable terms.

Lord *Clifton* (Earl of Darnley) said, he also must oppose
the

the motion, because he saw no good that could result from it, but much ill. The public mind was sufficiently agitated already, and he could not consent to give the people new uneasiness.

The question was then put, and the House divided.

<i>Contents</i>	—	16
<i>Not Contents</i>	—	52
<i>Majority</i>		36

LIST OF THE MINORITY.

Duke of Norfolk	Earl of Cholmondeley
Bedford	Shaftesbury
Marquis of Lansdown	Buckinghamshire
Earl of Derby	Lord Lovel and Holland (Earl of
Guildford	Egmont)
Thanet	Holland
Albemarle	King
Oxford	Say and Sele.
Suffolk	

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *March 23.*

The Inn-keepers' Rate Bill was read, a third time, and passed.

RELIEF OF DEBTORS.

The House went into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Petition from the prisoners confined in the Castle of Lancaster, praying for an additional allowance.

Colonel *Stanley* represented the increase which had taken place in the price of every necessary of life since the allowance of four-pence had been fixed by the 2d of Geo. II. and the necessity of increasing the rate; he therefore moved, "That an instruction be given to the Chairman to move the House for leave to bring in a Bill to increase it to sixpence," which was seconded by Sir Charles Bunbury, and agreed to.

The House being resumed, the report was received, and leave given to bring in the Bill.

Sir *Charles Bunbury* presented a Petition from upwards of three hundred prisoners confined in the King's Bench, praying for a similar increase.

STATE OF IRELAND.

Mr. *Fox*.—"Mr. Speaker, before I call the attention of the House to the subject of the motion, I this day propose

to submit to its consideration, it may be necessary to make some apology for the delay I have occasioned by my want of personal attendance ; but when I remind the House that I am obliged to attend an election Committee from ten o'clock in the morning to three in the afternoon, and that the interval between the adjournment of that Committee and the meeting of the House, is scarcely sufficient for refreshment and a slight attention to other avocations, I hope and trust the House will admit that statement to be a sufficient apology. Having stated this, Sir, by way of excuse for my apparent carelessness and disrespect, I shall now proceed to the business of the day. The business appears not only of importance in itself, but of urgency and pressure in point of time. I do not wish to go into the history of all the causes which have produced the late unhappy alarms and discontents in Ireland, and which have produced feelings also of a similar kind in this country, but I think myself obliged to give some reasons and why I consider it to the House, why I feel it to be my duty to recommend some measures for the peace and preservation of the country, to be the duty of the House afterwards to consent to the motion I mean to submit. First, I shall beg leave to call to the recollection of the House, that in 1782, discontents of a similar nature, and originating in the same grievances and causes of complaint, broke out in Ireland, when such measures for allaying them were immediately adopted as at that time, and even now, provided they had been virtually and substantially enforced, appeared not only proper, but completely sufficient. Those measures were a direct and unconditional recognition of the independence of Ireland, and a direct and unconditional recognition of the independent legislature of that kingdom. Some persons have since entertained doubts, whether that recognition was granted to Ireland by this country, as a boon, or as a right ; but without entering into any discussion, whether it was granted as a right, or as a boon, I have no difficulty in saying, that I have always considered it as an act demanded by justice, rather than as a boon granted by policy. When the government of this country, however, thought fit to make that recognition of the independence of Ireland, and the independence of the legislature, he should have supposed that they did feel themselves bound to follow up the principle, by making it completely independent, and by giving it the advantages of an independent legislature. Make Ireland independent, and give it the advantage of an independent legislature, and
you

you will restore the cordial affection which is so essentially necessary to the interests of both kingdoms. To those who considered the principle laid down by that recognition, to be a perfect recognition of the independence of Ireland and of its legislature, and still more, to those who considered that recognition as a boon, it must appear, that, notwithstanding that direct and unconditional recognition of the independence of Ireland, the same seeds of discontent, and planted on the same grounds of complaint, existing before that recognition, which the recognition was intended to remove, have grown up to the present very alarming height. I am no well-wisher to the dissensions prevailing in Ireland—far from it; but before they are hastily and inconsiderately reprobated, I do think it the duty of every man, to enquire how it happened, that the measures I have alluded to for destroying them, did not produce the salutary effects for which they were intended, and whether the complaints may not be founded on some actual grievance. I therefore think it my duty to attract the attention of the House to the present state of Ireland, since without any partiality or prejudice whatever, every one must allow it to be in a state of violence and peril, when the country is divided into two parties, one of which is actually commencing measures of great rigour and coercion, to subdue the discontented, as they are called by some people who are more temperate in their opinions and expressions, and the disaffected, by others. Whether the people of Ireland, however, be discontented with certain partialities, or wholly disaffected to the Government of this country, every one must know, that the prosperity and adversity of both kingdoms are so interwoven and blended together, that the misfortunes of either must be felt by both. Every man must know, therefore, that it is the interest and duty of this country, to endeavour to provide a remedy for any discontent or disaffection in the sister kingdom. With respect to the accounts which we have received of the present state of Ireland, we all know, that however magnified or diminished they may be, they are sufficient to shew, that a great part of that kingdom is in a state of discontent and disturbance. Here then it may seem necessary to enquire into the causes of that discontent and disturbance; but, as I said before, however circumstances may have contributed to produce that evil, I shall confine myself to general principles, and enter only into the discussion of two or three leading points. If, in the consideration of the Government of this country, it acted wisely and justly to check the rising discontents of
Ireland,

Ireland, by a formal recognition of its independence, how happens it that the discontents have since revived?—The reason is self-evident. Ireland was recognized to be an independent people, and to have an independent legislature in form; but this independence was never recognized in substance. The great principle of the recognition was to give the large body of the people of Ireland a voice in the nomination of its legislature, and I desire any man who finds that to be the nature of the recognition in form, to look and tell me whether he can find it in substance also, or whether the real independence and interests of the large body of the people of Ireland have been virtually and substantially promoted by that recognition. That is one point to which I wish to call the attention of the House. We all know that a great proportion, about 5-6ths of the people in Ireland profess the Roman Catholic religion; that these people were excluded from any nomination in the legislature among many other partial exclusions, and that at length they applied for some concessions. Some concessions were granted, and the repeal of the 6th of George I. was one concession made towards the establishment of an independent Irish legislature. Here it was necessary then to enquire whether the concessions made by the Government of this country to reconcile the people of Ireland, accomplished all the purposes for which they were provided, and if it appears upon examination to those persons who do not mistake paper regulations and theoretical privileges for practical Government, acts of Parliament for acts of real policy and justice, that the Catholics, and great body of the people of Ireland, suffer as severe a persecution as they did before any recognition was made or any concessions granted, I hope they will allow there may be some satisfactory reason given why the same discontent should prevail. These are the two principal points I mean to discuss; but I know there is another discontent unconnected with the Catholics; I mean the discontents of the lower classes of people in the north of Ireland, and I know there are some people in the House, who when the north of Ireland is mentioned, will be likely to lend a less favourable ear. Whatever may be the opinions of any person respecting the conduct of the people in the north of Ireland, the discontents of no class of men whatever ought to be viewed with that aversion, which will not submit to impartial examination, and I cannot much admire the wisdom of those by whom such prejudices are made rules of conduct. I do not think it very prudent, Sir, nor very politic

politic to neglect any measures of conciliation. When Gentlemen consider the calamities which the people in the north of Ireland have suffered by the war with France, a war in which they were involved without interest in the contest, when they consider the dreadful effects which the prosecution of that war has had upon the manufactures of the north of Ireland; when they consider the various and manifold constitutional grievances which the people of the north of Ireland labour under, and remember that other strong and just causes of complaint, the complete dependence of their legislature on the Executive Government of this country, keeping in remembrance, that though a recognition of their independence has been made in form, the independence of the people and the legislature does not resemble it in effect and substance, they may think the people in the north of Ireland have some reason to be discontented. But unfortunately, by the legislature not virtually representing the people of Ireland, the people of Ireland are as little sharers in the Government and controul of themselves and their interests as if they lived under any monarchy however absolute and despotic. These are the points to which I solicit the attention of the House; they are the same points which were first brought forward in 1782, when in point of form they obtained that recognition of independence to which I have alluded, though in point of fact the independence of Ireland upon Great Britain in substance and effect was not produced. Fortunate would it have been for both countries, if the language of discontent were not supported by proof, fortunate for Government would it have been if the Irish House of Commons had not pursued the measures which provoked this discontent, and justified the complaints against it; but most fortunate would it have been, if the recognition of the independence of Ireland had been fully, completely, and substantially established. Without entering into particulars, it is impossible not to observe one or two striking events which have taken place. At the time of the indisposition of his Majesty, the legislature of Ireland censured the lord lieutenant for his conduct, and declared their opinion of it in the most decided manner; and yet such was the transitory and capricious nature of things, that in a short time after, and under the very same lord lieutenant, the influence of the Executive Government was so much increased, that the Parliament in Ireland retracted their opinions, and unsaid all that they had said. Now can any
man

man be so wilfully perverse and blind, can any man so shut himself up in forms, as not to observe such monstrous and flagitious conduct? To shew to what an enormous extent the system of enslaving has been carried, I shall remind the House that half a million of money was once expended to quell a trifling opposition; and a person once publicly declared, that as much more ought to be applied in the same way. It has furthermore been asserted, and offered to be proved by a very respectable and well-informed gentleman, I suppose I may mention him, (Mr. Grattan), that there had been a direct sale of Peerages in Ireland, to make a purse to represent, or rather, and more truly and emphatically speaking, to misrepresent the people! Such was the notorious nature of the legislature in Ireland; and people of unimpeached character, of unblemished morals, of great property, the strictest integrity, and as much alarmed at the danger of an invasion or insurrection, as any alarmist of this or that country, and equally ready too, perhaps, to hazard all for the defence of their country in the hour of danger, had offered to prove it. I know some measures have been taken since to reduce the influence of the Executive Government of this country over the legislature of Ireland; but, notwithstanding I feel very little difficulty in saying, that a minority of the Irish House of Commons little short of a majority, are entirely depending on the Crown, and such a minority as makes the Parliament of Ireland dependent, not upon the Parliament of Great-Britain, for that would be the lesser evil of the two, but upon the Executive Government. The first petition of the Catholics for emancipation was presented to the Irish House of Commons, which, if that House were independent of the government of Great-Britain, and free for the purpose of indulgence, it might have been expected, not only to treat with kindness, but in some part to grant. The Irish House of Commons, however, were not content with doing nothing, but they added insult to wrong, by a positive rejection. In the ensuing session, the Catholics renewed their application, but directed it through another channel, which failed under the influence of the Lord Lieutenant.

In the following session, they applied to the Crown, who recommended their emancipation to the Irish House of Commons, and then the very Parliament which had before denied, rejected, and insulted the petition, recommended, influenced, and carried it. When I state these transactions,
I certainly

I certainly approve the second conduct more than the first though I do not think it necessary to express what may be my approbation or disapprobation of either measure, but I state them to shew that the discontents of the people of Ireland are not wholly groundless, and that they are not composed of that empty cant and nonsense which some people may imagine. How far the two concessions have been attended by the desired effects, are circumstances which may be considered in another part; but while the Executive Government of this country is creating the causes of discontent in Ireland, it seems necessary to exculpate the people of Ireland from the whole of the blame, and trace the evil to its source. Having shewn, therefore, how far government has been culpable in this point, I shall not state any more upon it. Subsequent events have occurred of no less importance. Before the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, we know there was no vote of emancipation in idea, but when my noble friend's appointment to the government of Ireland was agreed upon, the whole country knew he came prepared, with the concurrence of the king's Minister, to emancipate the Catholics, and that such an emancipation was finally expected. Now, however my noble friend may have been inclined to impeach his former system of politics, I believe it will be allowed on every part, that he was the most popular person that ever presided over the Irish administration; and one great cause of his popularity, however high his personal character might be, was the knowledge of the measures with which he came commissioned. Yet after the votes had been given for the Catholic emancipation, Lord Fitzwilliam was dismissed and the Parliament of Ireland rejected the very emancipation which before it was prepared to grant. It is possible, therefore, this general opinion of the people of Ireland with respect to the duplicity of Great-Britain in granting in form, what it rejected and annulled in substance, has not a little contributed to that discontent and disaffection for the British Government, which now unhappily prevail. It is to be observed, that the men in Ireland are of very different classes, among which the lowest in general are of the Catholic persuasion, of unenlightened minds, ignorant of the principles and proceedings of government, and easily misled. But it is well known, that in the northern counties there are some of the best informed and most enlightened men, which any

age or country has produced, who, well acquainted with the different forms and principles of government, and sensible of the constitutional grievances they suffer, have endeavoured to redress them. What has happened then in consequence of their complaints of these constitutional grievances? But as if nothing was wanting to provoke the union of Ireland, the people of Ireland are not only left unredressed under their constitutional grievances, but they are made to feel them. Therefore a plan has been formed by government to make the Catholics a party against the other malcontents, which will eventually produce the effect I wish for, a complete and perfect union. When I speak so, I must beg to deprecate the idea, which might imply thereby that I am a friend to the maxim of "*Divide et Impera*," my opinion, in the present case, is the reverse; and instead of thinking that the best way to retain and govern Ireland would be to divide and govern, I think the best practice you could possibly suggest to make Ireland happy in herself and strengthen her connection with this country, would be to unite all classes in reciprocal benevolence and equal representation. But surely, Sir, it does seem a little extraordinary that government should be pursuing measures as if they wished to divide the Catholics, and arm them against the other classes, at the very time when the same government has expressed openly, eagerly, and violently a reluctance to granting concessions to the Catholics, which it formerly held forth, and when some persons in the legislature have openly contended, that the former concessions were merely a temporary pacification, and have expressed a hope that an opportunity may arrive when they may be recalled. Soon after the expected emancipation was retracted, a violent disposition against the Catholics was manifest; and the House need not be informed, that the people were taken up and committed for High Treason, who, when put upon their trial, were acquitted, and not only acquitted, but even found so innocent of the charge, that there was no ground for prosecution. Their acquittal, however, and the total want of ground for prosecution was not sufficient, for government yet continued to display an hostile mind, and the Catholics were still made objects of persecution. They were not only made the victims of public prosecutions but of private animosities; and these proceedings produced such discontents that the government was now obliged to resort to remedies so violent, that, instead of alleviating the disorder, they tended
to

to foment it. In various places persons have been set aside without any allegation, oaths have been taken against those whose conduct could by any means be criminated by evidence, and those persons who were suspected, but against whom no evidence could be produced, were immediately transported without the form or shadow of a trial. The parties concerned in these summary proceedings were conscious that they acted without any legal sanction, and as they wanted a law to justify them in such cases for the future, and indemnify them for the past, they applied to Parliament for that purpose. The act known by the name of the "Insurrection act," was then passed, whereby the officers of the Executive Power have been enabled, on the plea of insurrection and disturbance, to dispense with all the forms of trial and conviction. By such means did the government acquire a taste for violent measures, with which it at present appears delighted; and they may now reap an harvest which has sprung up from the seeds they have sown. Another law has been since passed, nearly as objectionable as the former. This I mention merely to shew how pregnant and inefficacious all violent measures are, and the gradual progression must be from bad to worse. The act which I refer to is, the act to prevent the use and retention of arms by those persons who shall be declared by government to be in a state of disturbance. Whoever reads that act will find, that, as far as the law and power of the Executive government can prevail in such a parish or county, as shall be so declared to be in a state of disturbance, no person can be armed, or have arms in their custody, except with the approbation of the government. Thus it happened, they had taken measures beyond the rigour of the law for stifling the complaints in the North, and they afterwards found their measures to be so bad, that instead of destroying the old, they engendered new disorders; and thus they proceeded from one violence to another, till they were driven to exercise the most desperate restrictions. Can these short-sighted men imagine that the danger they descry in a body of armed peasantry will be cured by taking the arms away. They must be miserable politicians if they do, and this is a strong, singular, and efficacious instance of their weakness. They knew that some persons in that country entertained certain old religious prejudices, and they foolishly imagined that these prejudices would operate to prevent an union. For my own part I candidly confess, I should be sorry if it were so, be-

cause I am clearly of opinion there can be no good government where such prejudices exist to prevent such a union. It is morally impossible! But only consider, Sir, from whom they expect this co-operation! It is from the Catholics, from a set of men who must no longer hope any further concessions will be granted to them, and who are to be for ever disabled from obtaining a redress of their grievances, by having the doors shut against all conciliation.

So much with regard to the grievances of the Catholics.—There are many persons who think the Catholics have no grievances; who contend, that what few grievances they had have been redressed; and that they have had conceded to them such privileges as ought to make them perfectly content. The Catholics, you are now told, can vote for the nomination of members in Parliament; and the only exclusion they suffer is from filling offices of a higher class in the State, and occupying a seat themselves in Parliament. If that be the only exclusion they labour under, and, for the sake of arguing upon it, I will readily admit it is: on what principles of justice, on what principles of legislation, ought they to suffer that? The Catholics consist of five-sixths of the people of Ireland; and on what principle of justice or legislation ought five-sixths of the people to be excluded from a share in the government and legislature, wherein the controul of their property is vested? If it be urged that they ought to be excluded on a principle of policy, I will ask, what but an hostile mind, or a suspicion of jealousy, or some other narrow and interested motive, could form such a principle? But, in other points of view, I beg leave to ask, whether it can ever be supposed that any set of persons would feel an affection or interest for the preservation of that government, in which they are excluded from a share of action, honour, and emolument? I am aware, in putting this question, of the sort of reply I may expect to receive. I am aware that somebody may rise up, and say, "Oh, what you ask for liberty, but you mean power!" Yes, I freely confess, I do ask for liberty; and, in doing so, I comprize power, honour, and emolument. What other political security is there for the preservation and continuance of the liberty you grant me, if I am not provided with sufficient weight and authority to guard it? I do say, that, without a fair share of power and emolument, I have no political security whatever for the continuation of my rights; and he who distinguishes between them can have no sound regard for the feelings of mankind. It is true, you may give liberty without power or emolument. but in what manner do you give it? With a reservation to
yourself

yourself of retracting it to-morrow, if you please. Power, therefore, is the only security for political liberty. And how are you to give this or that liberty, or take away this or that restriction, if not according to the opinion and with the consent of the number and weight of the majority of the people. Yet here is the great mass and body of the people destitute of giving that opinion and assent; and till you give them that security, they are in possession of no resource, have no voice in the legislature, no share in the government, to defend their property from the attacks of power, or preserve their interests from becoming a sacrifice to others' indiscretion. Some may say, it is base to seek for personal emolument. It is certainly so with regard to individuals in opposition to the general interest; but the case is very different when a great body is concerned. The expence and burthens of the State fall upon the people, and it is no more than fit that the money should be again, in part, expended among the people; and as all public benefits must be distributed among private individuals, is it unfair that some of the people who have contributed to supply those benefits should be comprised in the participation? But when I consider with whom we are to argue and dispute this matter, the distinction becomes nugatory and ridiculous: for with whom do we argue and dispute the point, but with the present monopolists of emolument and power; men who are in possession of lucrative offices, and have obtained the reversions of more for themselves and families, and who endeavour to acquire an influence over corrupt boroughs, that they may obtain more offices, and more reversions? Yet these are the people who exclaim, "Oh! you base Catholics, you are coveting emolument and power! Are you not ashamed, you perverse generation! Do you not know that it is wicked, mean, and disgraceful, to urge such pursuits?" Really, Sir, it is contemptible to argue in this manner. The Catholics are men, and are to be governed as human nature requires to be governed. The expence of maintaining all governments must be considerable, and that of Ireland is certainly not a model of œconomy. Of the emoluments arising out of the establishments of government the Catholics have a just right to participate; and for a small and interested majority to imagine that they can monopolize all these advantages to themselves, is a pretension which will not be admitted. Mankind are not to be treated in this manner; and it is not nows-a-days that such claims will pass current in the world. The loyalty and activity of the Catholics, upon the late attempted invasion, is now the theme of the highest panegyric; but it is empty, unavailing

ing praise; *laudatur et alget* is the situation of the Catholic loyalty. If the Catholics constitute the majority of the people of Ireland, they ought to be put upon a total equality with the minority; and unless any man watched to what church another went, or in what manner he said his prayers, no religious distinction in a civil capacity ought to be known. This is a proposition so palpable and convincing, and so extremely necessary at this crisis, that I think it ought to be assented to with joy, if not with something like gratitude. So much for the Catholics. Now, Sir, in regard to the Protestants, for I shall continue to call the Presbyterians and Dissenters so, according to the established usage of this country, though the word, I understand, has fallen into such disgrace and disuse in Ireland, from the behaviour of those Protestants who adhere to the tenets and ceremonies of the Church of England, that an Irishman of a different persuasion disdains to call Dissenters by that name. I say, Sir, with regard to them, and of what they complain, although no Test Act is necessary for the preservation of the Church in Ireland, as it is thought necessary for the preservation for the Church of England, by excluding them from enjoying offices in Government; yet, by the present Constitution of the Government and the Legislature, they are denied an equal share in the representation. Here it will be proper for me to state what I stated before, in respect to the policy of refusing the Catholics that equality. I do not pretend to be very accurate in the history of Irish representation, and if I have been misinformed, I trust I shall be corrected; but the chief part of the right of appointing the Irish legislature, as I understand, except the counties, remains in the hands of what is called "Close Corporations." If that be true, it is then evident that these Close Corporations will admit no Catholics; and thus, whatever may have been the form of the concessions which you have made to those people, you have given them a power which by practice you defeat. However such concessions, therefore, may appear on paper, they are in substance and in virtue inefficient, and consequently the persons who thought those concessions would be satisfactory and conclusive, might be great theorists, but they were bad philosophers. If I am asked, what I would do for the Protestants? I would reply, that Government is full of abuses, without the means of redressing them; and the first step towards a general conciliation would be, by a serious attempt to reform the representation. Then, if I am told that it is thought unpardonable, at such a time, to take measures for improving

improving the liberty of the people, I will recur to the practice of former times.

Mankind being generally governed by prejudices, I do not mean in any improper sense of the word, but prejudices of authority, rather than of reason ; I apprehend parties of different prejudices of that nature, will not join so soon in acquiring a new good, as resisting a new evil ; and therefore Government ought to be cautious how it proceeds in the practice of measures replete with duplicity and wrong. But if the reverse of that proposition be true, all argument is at an end. No man will think, that when Ireland was conquered by King William, and made dependent on Great Britain, that the principles which dictated the system of legislation and Government in that country, were the same then as now. When Ireland was conquered by the arms, exertion, and abilities, of that great prince, the country was in such a situation as might render it necessary to make some accommodation to the prejudices of the people, and preserve such a system as it might be wise and necessary now to destroy. The laws which had before that been in force, it might then appear right for a limited time at least to continue, though I never can conceive that any thing can justify the preservation of those laws which are not worth the preservation. Whatever might be the wisdom, policy, or motives of our ancestors, for preserving the old abuses of the Government of Ireland, and gradually superinducing new ones, I cannot conceive, but that as the state is now formed upon English prejudices and opinions, and has been gradually uniting itself to those prejudices and opinions that the people of Ireland, the great body I mean, must wish to have the constitution of great Britain, not letter by letter, but virtually and substantially the same as this country. Is any man prepared to deny that to be the case ? I admit that whatever abuses there may be in the present constitution of Ireland, there are abuses in the constitution of this country also ; and I know that it has been a matter of discussion among some men, whether those abuses ought not to be reformed ? but without interfering at present with the propriety or impropriety of such a reform, I must assert, that I know no better mode of making those persons satisfied with our system of Government, than by changing it with Ireland, and putting them under all the grievances of that constitution. Some persons have gone far enough to say, that if there be not an actual representation of all the people of this country, there is at least
a virtual

a virtual representation of them ; and one honourable Gentleman, who is hostile to reform, I recollect, declared, that he should have no objection to the county of Middlesex returning the whole of the members of Great Britain to Parliament, if those members virtually and effectually performed all the functions. That condition was very prudently interposed ; and certainly so long as the Parliament of Great Britain is free in its exercise, and does duly and truly regard the interests and welfare of the people, it may not be very material in what manner it is chosen. This, however, is not the case with Ireland ; for the conduct of the representatives, as they are called, is so indecent there, that they practice one uniform system of jobbing, and make every thing subservient to private profit and emolument instead of public benefit. To suppose, therefore, that such men can long govern a well-informed and enlightened people against all their prejudices of authority and reasoning, is not warranted by any practice. Let us recollect that the war in which we are unfortunately still engaged, has not only occasioned a heavy imposition of burthens, and drawn large supplies from this country, but has done the same in Ireland also. And what is the consequence ? Why, in consequence of their constitutional grievances, their exclusion from any share in the Government or legislature, and the dreadful effects of the war upon their manufacturers, the people in the north of Ireland are now in a state of open discontent, which compel you to take the same part as in 1774 you took in America, either to attempt to subdue them by force, or endeavour to conciliate them. That the circumstances between the present discontents in the north of Ireland, and the discontents in 1774 in America, are different, every man is ready to admit ; although upon minute comparison there may be found more similarity than many people would at first imagine. The remote situation of America, and the extent of country over which its population was scattered, might render it more difficult to subdue the discontents there than in Ireland. But I remember the time when that weapon was in the hands of a contrary army. I remember when some person stood up in the House and said that the Americans could not resist this country, that it would be impossible for them to resist it, and that with one company or regiment of grenadiers, I forget which, we might go from one end of America to the other. I remember also in the same year 1774, I was the first person who spoke in this House, of my apprehension of an
American

American war, and the expression was treated by some person on the other side as absurd and ridiculous, for he considered it mighty hyperbolical to call that an American war which he looked on only as the momentary insurrection of a mob at Boston. There may be some persons of the same description now in the House, who may think the discontents in Ireland are exaggerated and unfounded, and I am sure I hope to God their thoughts may be justified, and that I may not have the fact in my favour. But I certainly do dread the truth of my accounts, and I have great reason to dread it. When I see those people apprehend a civil war, who by their wealth and influence were able to prevent it. But,

"Stultitiam patiuntur opes."

Else when they have the experience of the American war before them, and when they know that one cause of that war was the exclusion of the Americans from a share in the legislature and the King's councils, it is hardly possible to conceive how they can be so infatuated as to persist in the same fatal and destructive system. I wish to know what is to be their final resource?—They have already recurred to vigorous measures. They have tried them, and they have failed. If my information be correct, Sir, it is no longer a parish or a district which is in a state of disturbance, but a whole county. That large and populous county, the county of Down, I understand from various but concurring accounts, is at present under martial law: and every person knows very well how martial law is exercised. Martial law has been very ably defined by an energetic author. "A law whereby the power of the Executive Government is every thing—the rights of the people nothing." In respect to the disarming of the people in the county of Down, I remember a similar case at the beginning of the discontents in America. A letter from the Earl of Dartmouth to General Gage, stated the expediency of disarming the people in Massachusetts Bay. Now I am of opinion, that if those people had been left armed, the misfortunes of the American war would not have been accelerated as they were. People may resist the operations of the Executive power, although they are disarmed; and whether they be or be not successful in their resistance, I hope it will be admitted that they may be aided and assisted by external force. In the beginning of the American war, I know some people thought that France would not let slip the opportunity of distressing this country, by lending America her aid and as-

sistance, of which opinion I was one, while some persons thought she would not interfere, and others were doubtful. Here, however, it is not so; For I believe no man entertains a doubt of the will and readiness of France to distress us at this moment, by lending her assistance to the discontented in Ireland, if her assistance be required, and an opportunity occurs. For argument sake, however, I will suppose that all the measures of the executive power to subdue the discontents are successful, and that they effectually disarm the people in the north of Ireland. What are they to do then? Can they keep them disarmed? I fear a great body of people are to be kept constantly disarmed only by a continual armed force, and I doubt whether in peace, this country or Ireland be able to subsist a sufficient army for that purpose. But suppose it were, do you hope to gain the minds of men by the bayonet; or will you shew men they are free by exercising martial law? When you have terrified men for a certain time, do you think they are subdued? I believe you will find that a country may be terrified at times by prosecutions, and persecutions, but it will never be subdued in that manner, or Ireland would have been subdued long ago. But I believe there is a dislike against the people of the north of Ireland, because they are a part of the old leaven which rescued this country from the despotic chains of Charles I. and James II. But let it be remembered that that old leaven fermented, kneaded the British Constitution, and placed the present family upon the throne. I know of no better leaven; but we will suppose they carry it to excess; to excesses of such a kind, I confess, I should feel inclined to be somewhat partial. But suppose they have carried them to such an extent; have they had no reason? I am told, that the mode now adopted it this, to declare a county out of the King's peace, it is necessary that the magistrates should certify; many of the magistrates are not natives of Ireland, or resident there, but Englishmen and officers of the Fencible Corps. Are the people to be told that these magistrates are acting only in a civil capacity? But have they not been provoked to violence? Several of the principal people of Belfast were taken up.

The law is in that state, that men may be kept in prison without trial: is that an inference of their guilt? I have seen the wanton prosecutions of Government in this country, which the Juries happily checked. I have seen too much of these prosecutions to make me draw an inference of guilt from the circumstance
of

of a man's being taken up. I have heard in Ireland of men being ignominiously arrested and carried to Dublin, who, on their trials, were found to be perfectly innocent, and ought not to have been suspected. The people of the North, attached to these men, were determined that they should not suffer in their property. The people worked for nothing; they reaped their harvests, on purpose to shew either their good-will to the parties, or their detestation, possibly, of the conduct of Government. This, however, was construed to be a heinous offence, the people were dispersed by the military, and when some were killed, the attending the bodies to the grave was deemed criminal, and the persons assisting were dispersed, as if they were doing an act against the State. That these things will goad, who can doubt? That language and system will goad, who can deny? Is it not possible that they who preferred Monarchy may find the exercise of it so bad, as almost to doubt the excellence of monarchical government. But should the people even be totally subdued, can you do otherwise than keep a large military force? But suppose the people submit: I put the case in that way; can you trust to such a situation? Will their submission to laws which they detest last longer than your own power lasts, and their impotency? Will you continue to keep up your force? During the war, I believe, you will. But can Ireland afford to maintain it during peace? Is Great Britain able? Is it the way to persuade the Catholics to assist you, to refuse acceding to their demands? On no such supposition depend. I have heard that a direct application has been made, not from the Catholic peasantry, but from the Catholic nobility; a strong and urgent application to Government to grant the remainder of their demands. I have been told, what certainly it was unnecessary to tell me, that these applications have been unsuccessful. Refuse all these demands, determine to govern Ireland by a military force, risk a civil war; which of these evils is the worst I know not. But it may be said, what is to be done? My general principle is, to restore peace on principles of peace, and to make concessions on principles of concession,

I wish members to read that celebrated speech of Mr. Burke's before one of such concessions. Let them read that beautiful display of eloquence, and at the same time of sound reasoning, and they will find in that speech all those principles which it is my wish to have adopted. There is another expression of that gentleman's, I believe, in his letter to the people of Bristol. In that letter he says, that "that is a free government which the people who live under it conceive to be so." Apply this

to Ireland, not upon the collation of the laws of Ireland with those of Great Britain, but make it such a government as the people of Ireland shall conceive to be a free one. But, it is said, it is not possible to satisfy all persons. It may be so. But is there one concession that could be made to the Catholics which the people in the North of Ireland could object to? Is there one grievance which could be remedied in the North to which the Catholics would object? They have no inconsistent pretensions, no clashing interests. But I suppose I shall be told, that there are not the only parties; that there is another class; I will not call it Aristocracy; it would be disgracing the word. This class consists of the nobility and gentry, who have secured all the places of patronage and emolument. Is this a class to be considered? Ought it not rather to be a make-weight in the scale? But this language may be said to be romantic. It may be said, how should we have done with the Jacobites of old times? Sir, the times are different; the Jacobites only wanted a Stuart instead of a Brunswick; but these wish to destroy the Constitution. I agree that the one of these changes would not be more dreadful than the other. But there is this material difference, that with those who wish to change a Brunswick for a Stuart there can be no conciliation or compromise. The Irish wish to have a reform, upon an extended scale; they desire an extension of popular rights. But may there not be a conciliation and compromise? In that declaration of the people of Belfast, I see that they do most distinctly state, that they conceive all the benefits of freedom may be enjoyed under a government of King, Lords, and Commons. Here then was the moment for treating. But what is it the people wish for? They will have a different Constitution in the House of Commons. I think they are right. They desire a diminution of patronage, and they may go to the extraordinary length of saying, that it is not right to have a church in all its splendour, which is applicable only to a small part of the inhabitants. But do not these things admit of temperament and compromise? I am only stating extreme points. What they ask, is a Constitution such as Great Britain has according to some, and such as she ought to have according to others; a government which shall virtually express the will of the people; and if in treating with them you should fail, you will then have to resort to violent measures; you will then have to divide the people, as Mr. Burke said; not to divide the people of Massachusetts from the people of Virginia, not to divide Boston from Carolina; not, I say, to divide Ulster from Connaught, and Leinster from Munster, but you will

will divide the people who wish for the Constitution from those who wish to destroy it. These are the divisions which I wish for. But conciliation, it may be said, will not do. If it will not, then only may we have recourse to arms. Is there a worse in point of credit and resources? I know not. But sure I am that we cannot do worse than at the end of one war adopt measures to bring on another. I would therefore concede; and if I found I had not conceded enough, I would concede more. I know of no way of governing mankind but by conciliating them; and, according to the forcible way which the Irish have of expressing their meaning, "I know of no mode of governing the people, but by letting them have their own way." And what shall we lose by it? If Ireland is governed by conceding to all her ways and wishes, will she be less useful to Great Britain? What is she now? Little more than a diversion for the enemy. If you keep Ireland by force now, what must you do in all future wars? You must in the first place secure her from insurrection. I know it may be said, that the Irish wish to be separated from England, so as not to be involved in any future wars of our's. Suppose this should be the case; who that knows the vigour of a free people can doubt that, if in future wars it were to be put to her deliberation, she would furnish us with exertions as vigorous as formerly? Not that this is the species of connection which I wish; but I put it as an extreme case; and I say that it is better than extreme coercion and force. My wish is, that Ireland should have the same principles, the same system, the same operation of government, and, though it may be a subordinate consideration, that all classes should have an equal chance of emolument: in other words, I would have the whole Irish Government governed by Irish notions, and Irish prejudices; and I firmly believe, according to another Irish expression, the more she is under Irish government, the more will she be bound to English interests. One word or two on the subject of Lord Fitzwilliam's administration. He went to Ireland, and after a short residence was recalled. I wish to ask those who know that country best, whether the day of his departure was not a day of the greatest sorrow? That his Lordship has many qualities to render him popular, I know; but his popularity in Ireland was derived from this circumstance, that he went upon the principle of concession. What happened after his departure? Those who look only superficially at events boasted, that the effects which had been predicted in consequence of his Lordship's recall did not happen. The Catholic Petition was rejected. I said that these appearances were deceitful,

ceitful; that the effects might not be immediate, but would be certain. See what has happened, and say, whether you cannot conceive that great part of this has been produced by the hopes of the people having been disappointed, and by the cup of enjoyment having been dashed from their lips. You may be now in a situation somewhat similar. The measures you have adopted may produce apparent quiet, but I warn you against premature exultation. That the present state of Ireland can afford no satisfaction, all must admit. That there is so great a part of the King's subjects, as the county of Down contains, out of the King's peace and the pale of the Constitution, is a circumstance which we must all lament; and should it lead to civil dissention, no man, I am sure, but will feel the horrible situation in which individuals would be involved, and the calamities that would be entailed upon the public. The consequences of a war with Ireland are dreadful to contemplate; public horrors would be so increased by private feelings, as to spread universal misery through both countries; the connection is so interwoven between the individuals of the two countries, that no rupture can happen without wounding the most tender friendship and the most sacred ties. Sir, I say, therefore, try conciliation, but do not have recourse to force of arms, which, if once attempted to a considerable degree, cannot be remedied or recalled. In case of civil dissention, whom can you rely upon? Not upon that small party, many of whom could not bring so many men into the field as they bring members into Parliament. One word upon the argument of Right: I scarce can conceive that any objection can be urged against the present motion, in point of form. The interests of this country and Ireland are the same; its affairs are conducted by Ministers and the British Cabinet, and it is the privilege of this House to advise his Majesty. If I were to justify the measure by precedent, I might quote the case of an impeachment of the Earl of Lauderdale by the English Parliament, in the reign of Charles the Second, for his conduct in the government of Scotland. The connection, certainly, between Scotland and this country then, was less intimate than the connection between Ireland and England is at this time. But I do not wish to rest upon that precedent. Is not the Government of England exercised by officers of the Crown? Can there be any principle in a British House of Commons which should induce them to see the probability of a civil war, and of the separation of Ireland, which must be resisted by English resources, and not interfere on account of forms? I will put a strong case; Scotland was more separated from England than Ireland,

Ireland, and yet we were not restrained by forms from interpoling. We are all one people, of one empire. I am sure form does not stand in the way in the present instance; and if it did, I should still say, that it ought not to influence us. I move, Sir,

“ That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to entreat his Majesty that he will be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the disturbed state of Ireland, and to adopt such healing and lenient measures as may appear to his Majesty to be best calculated to restore tranquillity, and to conciliate the differences that subsist at present in that country.”

Sir *Robert Burdett* seconded the motion, and expressed himself in the warmest terms of approbation towards the right honourable mover, the integrity of whose conduct nothing could surpass. Sir Robert alluded to the prosecutions that are now carrying on in Ireland. He knew a person in Ireland (Mr. O'Connor) who was charged with high treason, who he believed to be as incapable of that, or any other crime, as any man in this or in that country. He knew him to entertain all those generous and noble affections which lead men to do good, whenever they can, to every individual, and to their country, who was endowed by nature, and cultivated by art, with all the qualifications which constitute the character of true greatness, and of whom it might be said,

Nil non discedum aut dixit aut sensit aut fecit.

When such men became the objects of persecution by Government, it was not difficult to see what was the view of such Government. It might be said, that he spoke like a discontented Irishman; but he spoke according to the dictates of humanity. He believed it was the interest of Government to grant to the Catholics what they asked, and he believed it was the interest of Ireland to grant them their request. He believed, also, it was the interest of Great Britain that such requests should be complied with; and he believed that it was the mutual interests of the two countries that both should be free. In taking a view of the probability there was that a brave people would make resistance if they were oppressed, he was naturally led to remember the opinion of the late venerable Earl of Chatham, who had said, “ I rejoice in the resistance of the Americans, because, if three millions of freemen may be reduced to slavery in America, that may be the means of enslaving this.” He had only one observation more to make, which was, that unless such a measure as that which was now before the House was adopted, and the House of
Commons,

Commons, as well as the people of this country, determined to address the Throne to remove his Majesty's present Ministers, and also to call them to full account before the highest tribunal that was known to the laws of this realm, to answer for their misdeeds—unless this was done with promptness and energy, he did not know that this country would be long in a situation in which it could be said to be worth the saving. He therefore gave this motion his determined support.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said “Sir, however generally the terms of the motion of the right honourable gentleman are couched, for an address to his Majesty, it is utterly impossible for any man to form his judgment on the merits of it, by proceeding to separate it from the various and collateral topics which he has thought proper to introduce; and without which the proposed address would, in reality, be indistinct and unnecessary. He has, in the early part of his speech, developed a subject to which I most seriously desire to call the attention of the House. The right honourable gentleman, who has made a speech on the whole system of the Irish legislature, who has argued at large upon the principles and frame of it, who has considered in a very ample manner its aptitude to make laws, and who has gone at length into the disposition of the people, with respect to the practical effect of these laws, began by reminding us, when he stated to the House the discontents now existing in Ireland, that it was necessary to have recourse to that period when we recognized and fully established the complete independence of the Irish legislature, as it might be known whether we gave that independence as a boon or a right. Whether that measure was a concession to Ireland? There is one certain point in which we must all coincide by having recourse to that period, and the truth of which the right hon. gentleman himself cannot controvert, that whether the establishment of the independence of Ireland was a concession or a recognition on our part, it was putting Ireland in the absolute possession of independence in point of fact. He had himself, on former occasions, fully admitted and acknowledged that important truth, and to oppose it would tend to shake the authority of the Parliament of Great-Britain. But, Sir, I beg leave to ask in what Parliament of Ireland was it that he recognized the independence of the legislature of that country, and the necessity of which he then urged with so much force? Was it one formed on a more extensive frame than
than

than that which now exists? Did it include more persons attached to the Roman Catholic interest of Ireland than it does now, or was it more calculated to give satisfaction at a time when concessions were not made in their favour, than now when such measures have actually taken place? Yet that very Parliament which existed at the period to which the right honourable gentleman has thought proper to have recourse, was conceived to be the national source of the most valuable blessings to Ireland. Surely he did not mean to say that when he himself pressed forward in establishing the independence of Ireland, he was then only putting the people of that country in possession of a delusion, and that the legislature was incapable of conveying to the inhabitants of the country the enjoyment of practical liberty. The right honourable gentleman will not therefore now maintain, that in the year 1782 he considered the Parliament of Ireland so extremely defective in its frame and principles, that the nation could receive no essential benefit from the line of conduct then pursued by it; and if he will not say that, and I am perfectly convinced he cannot say what would necessarily expose him to the charge of the most glaring inconsistency, I am naturally led to enquire on what ground it now happens, that we are to come this day to vote an address for an alteration in the frame of that Parliament, the superintendence of which we have entirely put out of our controul by the recommendation of the right hon. gentleman, and the independence of which we have unequivocally acknowledged? By what means will he make it appear, that, having renounced all power over the legislature of Ireland, having formally abdicated the privilege which might have once existed, of enforcing any internal regulation in that country, having solemnly divested ourselves of all right, of whatever nature that right may have been, to make laws in any respect for Ireland; I say, Sir, by what particular means will he undertake to make it appear, that it now remains for us to declare, what laws shall affect that country, and to dictate the precise modifications which he proposes to take place in the fixed principles of the legislature itself? In the year 1782, having given to Ireland a distinct and independent legislature, having with every solid testimony of good faith laid aside all pretensions to interference in the internal concerns of the nation, can any person now point out a subject to which Ireland should look with such well found-

ed jealousy as the subject presented to the consideration of the House by the right honourable gentleman's motion? I am ready to admit, that the address, proposed as it is, does not exactly say so, but, Sir, it conveys too much by implication, not to call for the attention of the House in a serious manner. Let us for a moment compare it with the speech of the mover, and if we proceed upon that just and reasonable ground to which the right honourable gentleman himself can have no objection, as his speech forms the ground-work of his motion, it will in that case be found to convey what ought not to be stated in general terms, but expressed clearly and fairly. The motion submitted to the House is, Sir, if I recollect right, for an address to his Majesty to be pleased to take into his gracious consideration the present disturbed state of Ireland, and to adopt such healing and lenient measures as may restore it to tranquillity. But what can be the effect of such an address? Will it be maintained that the situation of Ireland has not been the frequent subject of his Majesty's thoughts? Can it with the shadow of propriety be urged, that the royal mind has been at any time exempt from those considerations which may best promote the happiness of his people? What then can be the object of the address? It proposes to his Majesty the propriety of adopting measures for the restoration of the tranquillity of his subjects of Ireland. But such, Sir, must be his Majesty's disposition, and to what purport will our advice tend? No man can presume to say, that such is not the firm desire, as it most undoubtedly is the interest of the Executive Government. During what part of his Majesty's reign has there appeared any mark of neglect to the interests of the people of Ireland? On the contrary, Sir, the most solid testimonies have been given of the sincerity of his intentions to promote the happiness of that country, not by promises, not by declarations, but by deeds and acts which have been received with grateful satisfaction by the whole nation. The most minute attention has been paid to the commerce, to the agriculture, to the manufactures of the country. And what was at the time considered as the most valuable measure, the independence of the legislature was recognized beyond a possibility of doubt. The whole has been one continued succession of concessions, and to such an extent, that during the present reign, they have exceeded all the preceding ones put together since the Revolution. But, Sir, if further concessions are demanded, if the

the object of the address consists in soliciting these concessions, I must contend, that while it does not precisely point out the particular measures which are to be adopted, it is in the general state in which it now stands, nugatory and superfluous. If on the other hand, the address is compared with the right honourable gentleman's speech, which indeed must be viewed as the chief ground of the motion, I maintain that it would be absurd and impossible to express propositions any way conformable to the sentiments delivered in the course of that speech. In the first place, let us consider them politically. If they mean, that the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is accountable for any misconduct during his administration of public affairs there, as the servant of the Crown, and it shall be urged that the controul of abuses of that kind remains with this country, I answer to that, granted! If in another point of view they go, as was in a certain degree conveyed by the hon. baronet who seconded the motion, to arraign his Majesty's Ministers for gross errors and crimes committed in the government of Ireland, and to bring them to trial, I again answer, granted! But if they are calculated to express and recommend measures which are not within the province of the Executive Government of Ireland, it is but fair and also necessary to ask, are these measures so recommended to be carried into execution by his Majesty, who is only a part of the legislative authority of Ireland, and what must seem still more extraordinary, are they to be so adopted by the desire of the Parliament of Great-Britain? I beg leave to demand, whether his Majesty is not bound to act in what concerns the internal regulation of Ireland, in consequence of the advice of the legislature of that country? Our assenting to the address would therefore be highly unconstitutional with respect to Ireland, and we could not for a moment entertain such an idea without being guilty of an unjustifiable interference in the duties of the Legislative and Executive Government of that nation. Such, Sir, is the real ground on which I oppose the address. There certainly have been many other collateral topics brought forward, with which the right hon. gentleman has judged it proper to embellish his speech, but which do not apply to the question, and the discussion of which may do much mischief, without producing one single advantage. I will not, therefore, enter into a review of all the various statements and arguments that have been used; nor will I declare whether the right hon. gentleman's assertions are right or wrong, but I will leave it

to the justice and to the candour of the House to decide whether any one point he has this night proposed, can be carried into effect by any other means than by the voice of the Irish legislature? I must also observe, that he has, in the course of his speech, gone into a long historical narrative, and has attempted to shew, that the Irish Legislature is so framed as not to be adequate to perform its functions for the practical happiness of the people; that the principles on which it acts are radically defective, and that while it remains in its present state, the nation, or at least the majority of the nation, cannot enjoy the essential blessings of a free constitution. In answer to this, Sir, I must beg leave to direct the attention of the House to the great and important consideration, that the Parliament of this country has completely recognized, and solemnly established the independence of that of the kingdom of Ireland, which is as entirely distinct from, and incapable of being controuled by us, as we are independent of them. Yet the right hon. gentleman proposes an interference in the internal concerns of those who have now as much right to dictate to us, as we can possibly have to prescribe rules of conduct to them. Does it, Sir, become us now to say, that they are not qualified to act for the good of the people of Ireland, and that they are not entitled to the confidence of their constituents? We who told the same people upwards of fourteen years ago, that they were completely adequate to promote the public happiness, that they were framed to secure the prosperity of the country, and what cannot be too often stated, that they were unchecked by any external controul to deliberate and decide on the great business of legislation! If we speak thus to that Parliament, and such must be our language, if we give our assent to the address moved this night; I confess, Sir, it does appear to me the most extraordinary and singular line of conduct that can be adopted by one independent Parliament against another independent Parliament. But allowing, for the mere sake of argument, that we are authorized to dictate in the manner proposed by the honourable gentleman, is it reasonable that we should proceed in the way he has pointed out on the bare suggestions which he has stated to the House? Should we, supported by assertions alone, assume the power which, by his motion he seems to suppose we possess of watching over, and superintending the Parliament of Ireland? With regard to what may be termed the practical part of the right honourable gentleman's speech, though it is very
far

far from my wish to enter into a discussion of the various topics contained in it, yet I only follow him to shew, that by agreeing to his proposition, however you disguise it by any specious name, however you gloss it over by any artful expression, you do nothing less than attempt directly to controul the legitimate authority of the Parliament of another country, and to trespass on the acknowledged rights of another distinct legislative power. But taking the honourable gentleman's arguments in a different point of view—assuming for a moment that he has made out his case in an incontrovertible manner, and that he has fully proved to our satisfaction that the Parliament of Ireland was, in the year 1782, in every respect competent to perform its functions, and is at this time directly the reverse; I wish to know what is the practical conclusion he draws from my admission; and in what manner does he propose to remove the evil which I thus suppose he has clearly made out? What remedy, Sir, does he attempt to point out? Does he give us a single idea to guide us in the execution of the task which he wishes to impose on us? It is our duty to inquire what the principles are on which he invites us to proceed; and what the precise limits are within which the subject is to be confined. With respect to these questions—and I trust every gentleman will readily allow them to be questions, not only of great importance, but of absolute necessity, the right hon. gentleman has left us entirely in the dark; and he appears so little impressed with the urgency of them, that he has not even hinted at them in the whole course of his speech. Having, Sir, noticed the first point to which the honourable gentleman has called the attention of the House, I now come to the other parts on which his observations have been made, relative to the divided state and jarring interests of Ireland. He has first dwelt on the discontents of the Roman Catholics; and in the next place he has described at some length the grievances of the Protestants of the northern parts. He has, in the redress which he proposes to make to both sides admitted, that concessions ought to be made to both parties; and from the statements of the right hon. gentleman, who thus wishes to reconcile opposite claims, I am confirmed in my opinion that he only desires, and is eager to effect an alteration in the frame of the Parliament of Ireland, as far as it may arise out of the pretensions of the Catholics, and out of the demands of the inhabitants of the north. And there, Sir, I feel myself called on to notice the declaration made by the right hon. gentleman, that he would not enter into the particulars of
of

of the respective discontents of both parties, and yet he immediately after, notwithstanding that declaration, laid before the House a minute detail of circumstances on which I will not now dwell, thinking as I do, that a discussion of that nature is more calculated to inflame the minds of many than to prove of any essential service. When he came to mention the subject of religion, which has according to his statements, produced many of the present discontents, he certainly did not seem very solicitous to preserve the church establishment, and though he does not wish to address the Throne for the adoption of any particular line of conduct, it is something singular that he should recommend a measure that must affect a great mass of private property and even injure the church itself. Not deeming it necessary to trouble the House any longer on these particulars; and convinced as I am that neither we nor the Crown can interfere to effect that which exclusively belongs to the Parliament of Ireland, I shall make a few observations on what has fallen from the right hon. gentleman with respect to the rights of which the Roman Catholics are possessed, and also on the subject of those additional rights which it is his desire they should yet obtain. He observes that the Catholics ought to have the general right of voting, of sitting in the legislative assembly, and of filling the public offices. To this, Sir, I answer, that they are in the actual possession of every other right, but that they certainly do not possess the right of voting for members of Parliament, unless according to qualifications prescribed by law. This I conceive to be the mere state in which the Catholics are placed. But says the right honourable gentleman, enough has not been done to extend to them civil and religious liberties. Have not concessions of the most liberal kind been made to them since the Revolution; and during the present reign, has not every possible pledge been given to them of real affection, and sincere zeal for their best interests on the part of the Crown? But, Sir, it is curious to remark the detail which the right hon. gentleman proposes, even admitting that the present subject is a proper one for us to recommend to the adoption of the Executive Government. In this detail there unquestionably arises an inconsistency which he will find no easy matter to do away. He first declares that he means to satisfy the Catholics, by conferring on them the power of voting generally. But he immediately adds, that by pursuing that measure, we shall not be able to give them any weight in point of political liberty, for as he maintains that the elective franchise

franchise is so managed in Ireland, that it is entirely in the power of corporations to bestow or to withhold it, it would consequently be impossible for them to gain any material benefit, or to obtain any political influence, even if the law which he himself wishes to be passed in their favour were to take place. It therefore appears evident, that the remedy proposed by the right hon. gentleman himself, must be inadequate to meet the evil which he so seriously laments. And it naturally follows, as I have before had occasion to observe, that the great end of his plan is to alter essentially the whole frame of the constitution of the legislature of Ireland. In other words, Sir, the right honourable gentleman proposes an investigation and a scrutiny into the pretensions of the Catholics of the south, and of the Protestants of the north, for the express purpose of laying down what he considers to be just principles; and then the Parliament of Ireland must be new modelled and revived, in consequence of his previous enquiry. But is it reasonable to call on the Parliament of England to do that very thing which must not only be condemned by the Parliament of Ireland, but is not entertained in the opinion of even a considerable number of persons. Yet, Sir, this question, which calls into doubt the existence of the whole constitution of Ireland, is to be brought forward on mere surmise, and without the shadow of authority. I say, it does not come within the constitutional right which we may possess, of controuling the Executive Government. It certainly does not come within the possibility of any right which we can possess of interfering in considerations which exclusively belong to a legislature totally separate from, and independent of us. The other points which the right honourable gentleman has referred to, are lost, if possible, in more obscurity than that which I have just noticed. The various and clashing pretensions of the different parties are so extremely opposite, that it would be an arduous task to reconcile them. And if in commending certain political principles which are acknowledged by the northerners, he has in his mind principles founded on the French doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, and intimately connected with those revolutionary tenets which have produced such vast mischiefs throughout Europe, I maintain, Sir, that it would be contrary to the duty of the Parliament of Great Britain to entertain the motion of the right hon. gentleman supported as it is by the speech which he has this night delivered. There, are, Sir, none of his considerations on which

we

we can prudently or safely pronounce ; for there are none of them which may not excite such a flame as we shall never have it in our power to extinguish. They involve objects most delicate in their nature, and dangerous in their consequences. They embrace difficulties of a prodigious extent ; and on which I shall not dwell, as they have been sufficiently described in the speech of the right honourable Gentleman, so as to make us shudder with a just apprehension of the fatal and dreadful effects that must result from them. I must, therefore, Sir, consider the address proposed as a blind injunction, without any specific extent or means of execution. On this short ground I oppose the motion ; and with the conviction of the dangers that must arise from the adoption of it, with the solemn recognition of the independence of the Parliament of Ireland, with a just sense of our duty that others may not in their turn be wanting to us ; I cannot entertain a doubt but that the motion will be rejected by a considerable majority of the House.

Mr. *W. Smith*, in an able speech, replied to the observations of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and declared he was entirely unconvinced by them, and that he was called upon, in duty to the public, to vote for the address.

Colonel *Fullarton* said, whatever ideas any one may entertain respecting the merits or demerits of the present motion, it cannot fail to appear extraordinary, that in the actual circumstances of Great Britain and Ireland, this should be the first question brought before the House, which has any connection with invasion, preparation, or commotion, as applicable to either country.

In this capital, we are so bewildered with the diminished dignity of Abraham Newland's Signature, so overwhelmed with the calamity which has befallen the Bank, that we seem entirely to have forgotten all idea of invasion or commotion, as if the whole body of united Irishmen were suddenly transformed into a generation of lambs, or as if the whole French nation were not less miraculously transformed into a peaceful race like the people called Quakers.

But let me ask are we, or are we not, on the eve, and in the crisis of impending invasion and commotion, as respecting Ireland ? If we are not, I shall beg pardon and sit down. But if we are, how preposterous is the conduct of those, who have wasted the precious moments that ought to have been dedicated to purposes of urgent preparation, who have wasted them in an idle and pernicious war of words, on subjects
neither

neither connected with invasion, preparation, or precaution.

We seem to emulate the most discordant periods of the Roman History, described by Quintus Capitolinus, when dissensions between aristocrats and democrats, between debtors and creditors, concerning non-payments and insolvency, although there were no Abraham Newlands in those days, rose to such a height, that the enemy was at the gate, and no one would stir to repel the invader.

I beg to know, where is the difference between our conduct and that of the Dutch burgomasters in 1794, when they passively suffered the French to invade and occupy their territory. The Dutch burgomasters sat with tobacco pipes in their mouths; they said little and did nothing, except to counteract each other.

We, it is true, sit without tobacco pipes in our mouths, and we say a great deal: but as for doing, acting, or exerting, there we are exactly on a par with the burgomasters of Amsterdam, and unless we change our conduct, we shall deserve to share their fate.

I came lately from a distant part of the country nearly and locally interested in the fate of Ireland.—There, things are seen through a very different medium from that which is looked through by those who have lost their way in the fogs of London.

When I come into this House, it appears to me as if I came into an assembly where a number of persons had been benumbed by a torpedo, or struck by a paralytic affection, which palsies all their limbs, cripples their energies and power of action, and leaves nothing free and vigorous about them but their tongues. These, we seem to use, not for purposes of conciliation and preparation so essential on the present emergency, but we use them, like the degenerate and loquacious Greeks, in the lower and corrupt ages, in the days of the Comnenas, and Porphyrogeniti, who were so intent on idle disputation, that they persisted in it, at the very moment, when desperate invaders were actually in motion to attack Byzantium and occupy the empire.

I shall only add, that if this House persists in its present system, if one side of the House maintains that invasion is a bugbear, and the other side maintains that it is exaggerated apprehension, if one side neglects all efficient preparation and precaution as a work of supererogation and the other treats all ideas of internal disaffection and commotion as a

chimera, then both sides will forfeit all confidence with the public ; then the calamity which has befallen the Bank of England will cease to be a primary consideration ; then General Hoche with 100,000, or 200,000 Carmagnols, will find no difficulty in making good their lodgments in different quarters of these kingdoms.

General Hoche will find in the province of Ulster alone above 50,000 Irishmen united, with pikes in their hands, and with arms concealed, busily employed in secret discipline, and nightly drills, in order to qualify themselves to reinforce the French army.

This is no secret, it can be none, except in London ; these people have long ago communicated their force, their numbers, and intention, to the Government of France. While we sit here like silly pheasants who hide their heads under a bush, and then think that their whole bodies are protected.

It is time to put an end to palliatives and self-deceptions, it is time to put these kingdoms on a footing of impervious defence, while the delay of the French still offers us the opportunity.

Let this be done, and I will venture to become responsible that this country shall obtain from France such terms of accommodation, as it will not become this country to refuse.

But the people of England must make up their minds on two points. The first is, that Belgium will not be restored to the Emperor, and the second, that the Rhine will be the boundary of France. Otherwise this country must prepare to wage a war *ad internecionem*. You must prepare, like Pyrrhus, to wage perpetual war.

Lord Wycombe declared, that seeing how things were carried on, he never entered the House without a wish that he was relieved from the duty of attending it, and that wish was increased by a speech which he had heard that night. He must declare also, that with regard to the present situation of Ireland, which was owing, he had no doubt, to the measures of his Majesty's Ministers towards it, he thought himself called upon to support the proposition which was now before the House, and which was submitted by his right honourable friend the night. The situation of Ireland at this moment, was such as to merit the attention of the British legislature, because it was a serious and alarming situation ; that was the first reason he had for supporting the motion. The next was, that he did not imagine that any remedy could be expected

pected to be applied to the evil by the Irish legislature, and because it did not appear to him that the Irish claimed any more than was their due, and what was just and reasonable in itself. It was with some degree of shame, and no inconsiderable degree of regret, that he felt he could not say any thing of Ireland from personal observation, but he thought it was impossible for any man, however ignorant of the country, to doubt of the disturbances that have taken place there; this proved a palpable disaffection to the Government of this country. This was manifest in the abatement of the rents in some places, and the suppression of them in others.

It was enough, however to know what had been done in the great county of Down, which was declared by the proclamation of General Lake to be in a state of insurrection, and out of the King's peace. He thought, instead of rigour, conciliation ought to be tried in Ireland; for it was time enough to employ force when mildness failed. He should have wished that the Irish Parliament had been left to themselves to settle this, but that he knew the Irish Parliament had entirely lost the confidence of the people, and therefore the Minister's observations on the independence of the Irish Parliament were thrown away. Indeed, he had omitted to prove, because he could not, that the Irish Parliament was independent; the truth was well known to be, that a majority of that Parliament was at the will of the cabinet of England.

With respect to the Catholic emancipation, he had ever been a friend to it, because in a country professing itself to be free, he thought the interests of the many ought never to be sacrificed to the interests of a few. Besides at the very time that England was wasting millions to support the Catholic religion on the Continent, which was, notwithstanding all that appearing to expire it was not a little absurd that the persons professing the same religion in Ireland, should be so prosecuted.

The only argument against the motion, which had any appearance of plausibility, was that of the mutual independence of the legislatures of both countries. But was the present a time to advance a fiction like that, at a moment when Ireland was about to be in danger of being separated from this country; and the loss of Ireland would affect this country much more than the loss of America.

Lord *Hawkebury* considered the motion now before the House as one which could not be productive of any good consequence, but which might be productive of every species of calamity. The Irish legislature were entirely independent of the British Parliament, and of course the British House of Commons had no right whatever to interfere in the internal policy of the sister kingdom. What! were they so ignorant of human nature as not to know that though the measures suggested were proper to be taken, our interference would be a sufficient reason for the Irish Parliament rejecting them. He would put the case either way: were the measures to be taken in consequence of our interference, the Irish legislature would lose the whole credit of taking them; and should they be rejected, the House, by adopting the motion, would throw a stigma on the Irish Parliament, and pronounce that the independent legislature of Ireland was not qualified to discharge its functions. Upon this head he should even appeal to the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, who were so forward to cry out against any measure which, though it was even proper in itself, was taken by the Crown, without consulting the Parliament, when it lay within the province of the latter. If this was the jealous principle by which they were influenced in judging of the conduct of the different branches of the same legislature, ought they not, upon their own principles, to exercise the greatest caution in sanctioning any interference between two separate and distinct legislatures? With respect to Ireland, he was convinced that its Government was perfectly capable of managing the concerns of the nation, and there was not the smallest necessity for our interference, supposing it could be done with propriety.

Mr. *Curwen* said, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the noble Lord who spoke last, objected to the motion of his honourable friend upon very different, and not very consistent grounds. The one complained that his honourable friend had not been more explicit in stating the measures which ought to be taken, whereas the other had objected to what he had proposed, on the ground that every interference on our part was inconsistent with the rights of the exclusive and independent legislature of Ireland. The fact was, that the motion, as it at present stood, was not liable to the charge of an improper interference with the Irish Parliament, but it would have justly incurred the imputation, had it descended to that particularity of detail which was required by the right honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. *Curwen* contended, that it was not the motion of his honourable friend, but the observa-

observations of the honourable Gentleman which were really mischievous. It was far from being wise in the Chancellor of the Exchequer to fix a charge of Jacobinism upon any body of his Majesty's subjects, much more so in the present case, where it was so little deserved. So far was he from thinking the present motion mischievous, that he was of opinion the discussion would do good, if even the motion was negatived, inasmuch as it would shew the Irish nation that there was a part, at least, of the British Parliament which was not unmindful of their interests.

Mr. *Courtenay* rose to make some observations on what the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said respecting the county of Down. He understood that he had stigmatized that respectable county with a charge of holding Jacobin principles. He denied the charge, and asserted, that it was Jacobinism which was pursued against them, and that they were subjected to a Government of terror. The proclamation of General Lake (not that he meant to throw out the smallest imputation against that gallant officer) was such as might have been expected from Buonaparte, or Moreau, in the Palatinate. He adverted to Colonel Fullarton's declaration, that there were 50,000 men in the province of Ulster, with arms in their hands, prepared to receive the French. He believed that there were, but not to support them. On the contrary, he believed that they were prepared to resist an invasion, if ever it should be attempted. He knew the people in that province to have a strong spirit of liberty, and to be much attached to the popular, or what had been called the republican, branch of the Constitution. But was this a reason why they ought to be stigmatized as Jacobins? The people of the county in question had sent an Address to Lord Chesterfield, during his Administration in Ireland, declaring their readiness to meet and attack the enemy in case of an invasion. What was it that these brave fellows were blamed for? Was it for their high spirit and their attachment to the republican part of the British Constitution? He would say the republican part, for such was acknowledged to have formed an ingredient in our Constitution, even by Tory writers. Could any one suppose that an Address from the Crown would offend the Irish legislature? It was well known that they received and followed up the Address of the Catholics, which they at first rejected, although it had come to them recommended by the Crown. So would they receive any other address with the utmost duty and loyalty. Mr. *Courtenay* stated, that many respectable persons had been taken up at Belfast, and were now languishing in
gaol

gaol without being brought to trial. And what was the reason? Because Government dared not bring them to a trial, knowing that they could not establish their guilt, and that their acquittal might tend to disconcert the plan on which they were at present acting.

Mr. *Hobhouse* supported the motion, on the ground that it would shew the people of Ireland that we both sympathized with their situation, and were not insensible to our own interests.

General *Egerton* said a few words, which we did not hear distinctly, but which we understood to be in defence of Gen. Lake.

Lord *Frederick Campbell* said, he had no doubt but that Mr. Fox brought forward his motion from the best and purest motives; but he conceived the consequences arising from it would be the most dangerous of any that ever happened to Ireland. He thought so from his heart. Suppose that the Irish Parliament was as corrupt as had been stated, he would ask, what right that House had to say so? As to all that had been said about the reforms intended to have been made by Lord Fitzwilliam, he thought he never could have effected them. had he attempted to put them in practice. The people of Ireland were generous and high spirited, and never took away from any man the confidence which was due to him. No man ever enjoyed more of their confidence than the present Lord Lieutenant. Let any gentleman go to Ireland at present, and there he would see that commerce had encreased, the manufactures were flourishing, and that no country ever was so contented under its present Government. In short, the country was making an astonishing progress in prosperity; and therefore he should be against interfering in the concerns of its Government.

Mr. *Fox* availed himself of the indulgence of the House to make a few observations in reply to the arguments which had been advanced against his motion. The substance was as follows: The noble Lord is certainly at liberty to consider the motion, which I have had the honour to propose, as having a very mischievous tendency. I think not only that the motion is not mischievous, but that even the discussion, though the motion is not carried, will do good. Another noble Lord (Lord Hawkesbury) was of opinion, that it was an infringement upon the independent rights of the Irish Parliament; and that that Parliament, from motives of jealousy, would refuse to accord to the measures, even though they were proper to be adopted. For my own part I have no such suspicions. It is in the recollection of every one, that when a Petition was
presented

presented by the Roman Catholics of Ireland to the Irish Parliament, the Petition was rejected with indignation ; but when the subject of the petition came recommended to them from the Crown, at the instance of the British House of Commons, even that proud and jealous Parliament, as it was represented to be, went in their concessions far beyond the demands of the Petition, which they had spurned before. It is asked, are we to revise and controul the conduct of the independent legislature of Ireland? There is no man who would wish to put the independence of the Irish Parliament higher than I would. But is Ireland at present in extraordinary circumstances, or is it not? It is not, indeed, by the account of the noble Lord (Lord F. Campbell), who represents it as prosperous and quiet beyond example, and as reposing unbounded confidence in the present Lord Lieutenant. Considering the noble Lord, who is at present Viceroy of Ireland, as a private individual, I believe that his character is good, amiable, worthy, and such as every one would delight to praise. But I suppose the noble Lord meant, that his government commanded the confidence of the nation. How then am I to reconcile this universal confidence with the accounts, to which the noble Lord cannot be a stranger, that a considerable district of the country is declared to be out of the King's peace, and with what we have heard this evening, of there being 50,000 men in one province prepared to join the French in case an invasion shall be attempted. In such circumstances, it is an insult upon the good sense of the country to say, that the Government of Ireland at the present moment is popular. But still it is improper in the British Parliament to interfere. Suppose that this country were reduced to that disastrous situation, in which the counties of York and Lancaster should be declared out of the King's peace, which would bear pretty nearly the same proportion to England that the county of Down does to Ireland, would any man consider it as an unwarrantable interference in the Irish House of Commons to address our common Sovereign on the occasion? I declare, for one, that, so far from being indignant, I should feel grateful to that branch of the Irish legislature, was it to address the King to employ lenient measures in healing the dissensions of the nation. Even, as I said before, however, though the motion be lost, I think the discussion will be attended with beneficial consequences, because it will shew the people of Ireland that it is not to the French alone to whom they may look for a redress of their grievances; but there is, at least, a proportion of the British House of Commons who feel for them under oppressions, and who are desirous to minis-

ter to their relief. In this view of the subject, I have no hesitation in saying, that every additional vote which is given to the motion gives an additional chance for the preservation of the peace of Ireland. The honourable Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) asked why I, who moved the independence of the Irish Parliament in 1782, should now ask to exercise a controuling power over that legislature? My answer is, in 1782 I was for giving the Irish nation what they asked, because they thought it was best for them. In like manner I do not now propose the measures, which I have recommended on this evening, because I approve them, but because the people of Ireland request and desire them, because they are unhappy for the want of them, and because, if we persist in denying them, a rebellion may be the consequence. And this I give as an answer, not only to the question, but also to the objection, that I had not specified the mode in which parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation ought to be carried into execution. I did not do it, because these measures ought to be taken in Ireland, and executed in a way most agreeable to the taste of the Irish nation. But there are other things which his Majesty might do to quiet the discontents at present existing in that part of his dominions. Might he not dismiss from places of public trust many persons who are now at the head of affairs in that kingdom; men who libelled the character of a nation at a moment when its zeal, patriotism, and courage, were most eminently displayed; men, in short, whose administration may be considered as the source of those calamities with which the country is afflicted. With respect to the proclamation issued by the gallant officer who has been referred to, I profess personally to have the greatest esteem for the character of that officer, and do not consider him as at all responsible for its contents. There is only one other topic to which I shall advert. The honourable Gentleman alledged, that the principles of liberty for which I have contended, are not English, but French. Be it so. But if they are Irish, they are worthy of the attention of the Government of that country. But even allowing them to be French (and I certainly will not recommend the introduction of French principles into this country), still it is better to countenance them than to go to war with them. The honourable Gentleman, however, is not yet tired of fighting with French principles. Are the House tired then? Are they prepared to begin another four years' war, to squander millions of treasure, and to shed rivers of blood? If they are, then let them go on with their noble enterprise. I will warn
them,

them, however, that if they war too much against French principles in Ireland, they may, in the end, be introduced into Great Britain itself. Unfortunately I have been a long time deprecating coercive measures. I deprecated the adoption of them against America in 1774. In 1793 I deprecated their being employed against France. And I now deprecate the same system being followed in Ireland. Though my advice has not hitherto been followed, it is some consolation to me, individually, that it was not withheld; and, whatever consequences may result from the conduct that is now pursuing towards Ireland, I shall not have to reproach myself with not having remonstrated against it. All these measures of coercion flow from the same source. War has been preferred to negotiation, and force to conciliation, because in this age of philosophy, instead of regulating our plans by a mild and enlightened policy, we have acted upon the maxims of barbarous times. I shall now conclude with quoting the words of an ancient orator (Cicero), which I recommend to the serious consideration of every person to whom is assigned the important task of legislation: "Carum esse civibus, bene de republica mereri, laudari, coli diligere gloriosum est; metui vero et in odio esse, invidiosum, detestabile, imbecillum, caducum."

The House then divided on the motion.

<i>Ayes</i>	—	84
<i>Noes</i>	—	220
	<i>Majority</i>	136

LIST OF MEMBERS WHO JOINED OPPOSITION ON MR.
FOX'S MOTION CONCERNING IRELAND.

Sir J. Leicester	Dr. Lawrence
Mr. Bryan Edwards	Mr. B. Robson
Sir G. Shuckborough	Sir H. W. Daffwood
Mr. T. Tyrwhitt	Mr. L. Dundas
Mr. Richard Payne Knight	Mr. C. Dundas.
Sir C. Hawkins	

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, *March 24.*

The royal assent was given, by commission, to the Mutiny Bill, the Land Tax Commissioners Bill, and several private Bills.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *March 24.*

Mr. *Ryder* called the attention of the House to the subject of grain. He expressed his satisfaction at the price of grain having fallen considerably, particularly the articles of oats and barley. He said, that it might still be desirable to preserve the laws respecting the importation and exportation of wheat. Mr. *Ryder* moved, that the act of the present Parliament for regulating the importation, and prohibiting the exportation of corn, &c. be read, which being done, he moved, that the house do resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider of the said act. The Speaker having left the chair,

Mr. *Ryder* stated, that his object was to move to repeal part of the act, for the purpose of allowing the exportation of corn, but that was not to take place, except in certain districts, when corn should be under a certain price. He therefore moved, that the Chairman be directed to move the House for leave to bring in a Bill to repeal the said act. The resolution was carried, and the House being resumed, the report was ordered to be received on Monday.

Mr. *Fox* presented a Petition against the London Wet Docks Bill from the Company of Watermen. Ordered to be referred to the Committee on the Bill.

He presented another Petition from another body of persons, and it was referred in the same manner.

MILLER'S PETITION.

Mr. *Fox* then said, he held in his hand a Petition of quite a different sort from those which he had just presented. It was a petition from an individual, Dr. John Miller, stating several circumstances, the principal of which were, that the petitioner conceived he could state and prove several important matters relative to the revenue of this country; that much more revenue was received than by law the collectors are empowered to collect, and he wished that the subject should be taken into consideration by the Committee of Finance which are now sitting. He wished that the abuses, of which he had to complain, should be laid before that Committee, in order that they might have before them the real state of the revenue; and that they might see not only what the produce of the revenue is, but what it would be, if fairly collected. The Petition then proceeded to state grievances which he had suffered. Mr. *Fox* said, he would not recapitulate the whole of the Petition,

tion, but he would state from memory the general substance of it. The Petition stated, that in a particular branch of the revenue (the window tax) illegal exactions were made upon him, and that he had been compelled to pay more than by law he was bound to pay. He stated, that upon application to certain officers the illegal exaction had been discontinued, but that he had no redress for what he had suffered in the mean time; that he was told only that similar demands should not be made in future. But that others were still imposed upon as he had been, as they did not make the same resistance as he did; that he wished the state of this case to be laid before the House, for that no man should be called upon to pay any thing for the revenue but what the law bound him to pay; and it stated some resolutions of the House of Commons in the time of Charles the Second, to restrain officers from making improper demands in the collection of the revenue, and praying that the Petition might be referred to the Committee of Finance, and for such general relief as to the House should seem to be just.

The Petition was brought up, read, and ordered to be laid on the table.

Mr. Grey moved, That there be laid before the House an account of the advances made, or ordered to be made, for the service of his Imperial Majesty since the 13th of December, 1796, as also the securities for the repayment of the same, together with the date of the advances respectively. Ordered.

BANK INDEMNITY BILL.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved the order of the day on the Bank Bill, which was to go into a further Committee.

The House accordingly resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House.

In the discussion of one of the clauses,

Mr. Fox stated some difficulties which he feared would occur in the course of carrying the Bill into effect. It might be said in defence of the clause, now in discussion, that provided for the payment of the army and navy in specie, that their claims upon the public faith were great. Granted: but they are not greater than the claims of the public creditor. That it was necessary they should be paid in specie. Granted: but not more necessary than that of paying the public creditor, especially in small sums.

Mr. Whitbread said, that for the payment of the navy in specie he could see a good reason; but why the soldiers should be paid in cash, when the day labourer and the working artifi-

cer were to be paid in paper, he could not see any reason ; unless it was that Ministers chused to have it understood that they would pay men who had arms in their hands, in order to satisfy them, and perhaps to call upon these men in arms to silence the murmurs of those who were unarmed.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it did really appear to him to be a singular mode of discussing this clause in the bill to make the distinction which the honourable gentleman had made, between the navy and the army ; and especially to insinuate that Executive Government had in view some sinister purpose ; not that of providing for the general defence of the kingdom ; but that they had an intention of violating the law ; an intention of violating the liberty of the subject, of reducing the country to a state of subjection to a military government. Such insinuations were highly injurious as well as unfounded. And be it recollected that the army as well as the navy, was a body of men, whom, by law, had been raised for the defence of the nation, whom, by law, we had a right to discipline, and whom, by law, we were bound to pay. Would the honourable gentleman tell him, that the public creditor would be safer ; that the industrious labourer would be safer in the enjoyment of the reward for his daily toil ? would the country be safer, would the constitution itself be safer, [*a cry of hear ! hear !*] would he tell him that he himself, or any of the gentlemen who sat round him, would be safer ? Would the labourer have more security for the wages of his honest industry ? Would any man in the kingdom have more security, if we had an army without pay, than if we had an army regularly paid ? Was that the situation, which, as a friend to order, as a friend to peace, as a friend to government of any description, as a friend to legal liberty ; were these the principles which the honourable gentleman would wish to recommend ? He knew that a small portion of specie to pay the army would be extremely serviceable, and he must return to the hope that gentlemen would coolly reflect upon this subject, and see the necessity of what was now proposed, for it was a measure, grounded upon public necessity, and had for its object the public safety.

Mr. *Fox* said, that the right honourable gentlemen had asked his opponents whether they were friends to peace and order. He hoped they were. He thought the mischiefs of the clause in question would be great, but he thought they would be trifling when compared to the language of the right honourable

honourable gentleman : for if this species of argument was to prevail, public credit must be destroyed. The law had enabled us to raise, the law had empowered us to discipline, and the law ordered us to pay our army. That he knew as well as the Minister. But at what time had the law said we should pay the army ? After payment of the public creditor : for the law had said that we must pay the public creditor even before we should raise an army. The principle which the Minister insisted upon now, would lead to an immediate tax on the funds ; for if the army was to be paid in preference to the public creditor, it would follow that any part of the funds might be hereafter appropriated to the payment of the army ; for it must lead to this if the necessity should arise. This was entirely reversing the system of our public credit, for our law was, that the public creditor should be paid before our forces could be raised. He would add, that if we preserved our public credit, it was much more likely that we should preserve public peace and the constitution, than that we should preserve either with an army paid with the produce of the public debt.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* recommended a calm discussion of the subject, and entered into a vindication of the bill.

Mr. *Sheridan* followed the Minister, and maintained there was great danger in the speech of that honourable gentleman, inasmuch as it seemed to favour the military too much, and seemed to prepare the country for a military government ; but if he insinuated that the military would be ready to embark in such a plan, he grossly libelled the military of this country. Indeed he believed, if the Minister wished to see a military government established in this country, he was singular in his wishes. There was but one man in that House who would not be perfectly safe without a military government.

Sir *Michael le Fleming* spoke to order. He said, he thought Mr. *Sheridan's* speech tended to make the labourers and industrious poor jealous of the military and discontented with government.

Sir *W. Pulteney* wished not to be classed among those who thought the present bill necessary. He did not think that any legislative measure ought to be taken to restrict the Bank from issuing cash. All that he thought necessary was to indemnify the Bank for acting in obedience to the Order in Council. With respect to the present clause, he had no objection

jection to it, as it would be proper to continue to pay the navy in cash, which had been always done, and as to the army, it never had been paid in cash, and though the provision was extended to it, it would not encrease the quantity of specie issued by the Bank, as it would be paid in paper as usual.

Mr. *Sheridan* allowed that the worthy baronet was quite right in calling to order, but that unfortunately he had fixed upon the wrong person. The argument which he had been using, was to shew that the Minister had been making invidious distinctions between the people and the army, and that he thought so ill of the military as to suppose that they would insist on being paid in cash. The charge, therefore, against the right hon. gentleman was, that he had spoken of the army as wishing to be put on a different footing in point of payment from all the rest of the country. It was therefore on this ground that he made sure of the worthy baronet's vote, for it was the Chancellor who had pronounced a libel upon the army, not the person who had been called to order.—To the question respecting the safety to be derived from the military, he should only repeat, that there was but *one* person in the country who would not be more safe without a military government. To the clause in question he wished to object, and to move that the Treasury should have the power of drawing upon the Bank for specie, only for the payment of the army and navy abroad.

Mr. *Whitbread* observed, that taking the argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the subject of paying the army in cash, whilst the manufacturer and labourer were obliged to accept notes, and coupling it with the general conduct of Ministers, and in particular with the open declaration of one right hon. gentleman opposite to him (Mr. Windham) “that it might be necessary to use a vigour beyond the law”—the whole appeared to him extremely alarming. He could not help conceiving that they had something in contemplation which was wholly unconstitutional.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* denied that he had any thing in view, by paying the army in cash, more than keeping upon a safe and permanent basis the defence of the country.

Mr. *Fox* said, that when he considered it was the present Ministers who had plunged us into a war, that their misconduct and extravagance in carrying on that war had caused the present failure of the Bank; and that from the dreadful

ful consequences of that failure, internal tumults and commotions were but too probably to be apprehended; he owned he felt far from happy in the contemplation of what might be in the power of Ministers to do. After the alarming manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had argued, as a reason for paying the army in cash; after the very unconstitutional measures which Ministers had hitherto adopted, and shewn themselves fond of, he was by no means easy, to see them possess such a dreadful engine of power in their hands as an army thus paid, in case their apprehensions and fears for their own personal safety, should lead them to call out that army to resist internal tumults and commotions.

Mr. *Sheridan* said that, in the present alarming conjuncture, the calamities of which were induced by the measures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was not surprised that the honourable gentleman had abandoned his lofty tone, but he was rather surprised that he ever had assumed it. He must be conscious that he had brought the country to the verge of ruin, and that feeling that no retreat was left him, he might have recourse to unconstitutional measures for his own protection, whether of influence, corruption, or military force. At the commencement of his financial career, he boasted that, by establishing the consolidated fund, he had erected a pillar of public credit, on which he desired no greater honour than that his name should be engraved—that pillar he had now undermined, and the only matter of surprise was, that he had not been crushed by its fall. He said, that he hoped the time was not far off when he should see the Chancellor of the Exchequer held up as the sole author of all the fatal calamities which have befallen the country, and made solely responsible for them. It was on this account that he had said in a former part of the debate, he knew but of *one* man in the House who had occasion to wish to pay the army in cash, in order to ensure military protection.

The clause was at last agreed to without a division.

Mr. *Sheridan* suggested that a clause should be introduced for the purpose of obliging government to take paper in payment of the taxes.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he had a clause to that effect in his hand, which he meant to propose to the Committee.

The clause limiting the duration of the bill being read,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* allowed, that as short a
time

time as possible should be fixed, but still it was necessary to allow so much as might give the Bank as great an opportunity and chance as possible, to pay with such effect, as to ensure a continuance of doing so, when once they should open again to pay in specie. Much might be expected in time to be brought in, from people in the country, and much from foreign countries. He was quite at a loss, he confessed, what time to propose to the Committee for their adoption; but as far as his private opinion went, in order to give every probable scope to the Bank, he thought the time ought not to be shorter than the 24th of June next, and he accordingly moved that the blank should be filled up with that day.

Sir *William Pulteney* was of opinion that three months was by much too long, it ought to be as short as possible.

Sir William said, he disapproved of extending the period of the Bill to such a length of time. The longer in his opinion the Bill was allowed to operate, the worse the condition of the Bank would become; he had a plan in his pocket which he was confident would save the country, if executed in time. He thought that the debate should be adjourned, in order to give Gentlemen an opportunity of considering the subject coolly and deliberately. The period of the Bill ought not to extend longer than a month, but in the mean time he should move that the debate on the clause be adjourned till Wednesday next.

Mr. *Ellison* was averse to all theories, and wished to hear plain sense and plain facts. He was conscious that he was an independent member of Parliament, and was not ruled by the opinions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, much less by that bench opposite him (the opposition bench.) He entreated an honourable Baronet (Sir William Pulteney) to bring forward the remedy, the panacea which he said he possessed, and which, he trusted, would prove an efficacious remedy for the present evils of the country.

Sir *William Pulteney* said, that he had no mystery about the remedy he had to propose, it was no panacea, no nostrum, but what men of experience and knowledge in financial affairs might easily devise; it was in vain to propose his plan at present; for if the present Bill passed with its clauses, such as they now stood, every remedy that could be proposed, would be unavailing. He was now ready to propose his plan, if the nature of the debate and the hour of the night would permit it. But he was more desirous that we should make a
short

short pause previous to the clause now before the Committee being adopted, especially as no possible injury could arise to the Bank from the interposition of a short delay.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* was desirous that the Bill should go through the Committee with dispatch; at the same time he had no objections to a few days delay, if the honourable Baronet wished to lay his plan before the Committee on the bill, and could not do it conveniently on this evening. He expressed his apprehensions, however, respecting its efficacy, though he was not in possession of it.

Sir *William Pulteney* complained that it was unfair to prejudice the House against his plan before it had been heard, and persisted in declining to bring it forward that evening.

Mr. *Fox* thought it highly proper in the worthy Baronet to defer laying his plan before the Committee till a future day, not that Wednesday would be better for the discussion of it than that day, but, because it should be considered abstractedly from the present bill, after the report of the Secret Committee was laid before the House. He was of opinion, that the period of the bill was too long; he should therefore move, that the blank, instead of the 24th of June, be filled up with the 1st of May.

Sir *William Pulteney* said, that Parliament should keep, as much as possible, the controul in their own hands, to act as circumstances might direct, he therefore preferred the short day to that proposed by the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*.

Mr. *Fox* moved as an amendment that the words "first of May," should be substituted.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the controul was not to be taken out of the hands of Parliament, as the right to alter was reserved.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that he agreed that the most proper time for proposing any plan, would be after the report of the Committee was presented, and he thought that at least a partial one ought to be made. He did not think the credit of the Bank irretrievable, but he dreaded the torpor into which men's minds would be thrown by delay. If the Bank was not able to go on as before in less than two months, it was completely undone. He thought it absolutely necessary to have a clause to prevent the Bank ever again obeying such an Order of Council. If the idea were to take root that such a measure might be repeated, the credit of the Bank never could be recovered.

He made a fanciful allusion to the Bank, as an elderly lady in the city of great credit and long standing, who had lately made a *faux pas*, which was not altogether inexcusable. She had unfortunately fallen into bad company, and contracted too great an intimacy and connection at the St. James's end of the town. The young gentleman, however, who had employed all his "arts of soft persuasion," to seduce this old lady, had so far shewn his designs, that by timely cutting and breaking off the connection, there might be hopes of the old gentlewoman once more regaining her credit and injured reputation. In order to facilitate this, he should support the amendment of his right honourable friend. On the same ground he thought, as to the plan of the right hon. Baronet, that it would be better put off, till the Committee had made its report on the *causes* which gave rise to the Order of Council. He alluded to the *remote* causes. The *proximate* causes were very plain and well known. Government wanted money, and could not do without it. They knew there was money in the Bank, and they laid their hands upon it. The Bank knew their power, and dared not refuse it. In the same way, said he, if a highwayman met me on Bagshot Heath, put a pistol to my breast, and demanded my money, the *proximate* cause is, that the highwayman wanted money, and had a pretty certain notion that there was a sum in my pocket. The *proximate* cause of the highwayman was clearly want of money, the *proximate* cause of my letting him take it from me is, that I feared he would take my life if I denied him. The House were in possession therefore of the *proximate* cause, and the more distant ones we hope to be acquainted with soon. He hoped, therefore the honourable Baronet would postpone his plan, till the Committee had made their report on all the causes relative to the Order of Council.

Mr. Lubbock said, for my own part, I have no idea of any real want of specie in the kingdom: I offered Mr. Newland to pay into the Bank 10,000 guineas on condition he would repay the same sum in specie if I required it, which I really did not apprehend; and that I knew those who would pay him in the course of a few days 50,000 guineas on same terms; that, for many reasons, in my opinion, the time the Bank should open to pay again in specie ought to be left to the judgment of the Governor and Directors, without fixing any specific time, as the naming any certain day might be particularly injurious to the country bankers, who would very probably have many of those who held their
notes,

notes, calling on that very day for their money ; whereas if no particular day was fixed, and the Bank began to pay specie without such notice, all would go on gradually and smoothly ; that I was convinced, with a very little assistance the Bank might go on as usual immediately, and discount freely ; if *three* millions were added to their capital, it would enable the Bank to discount to a much larger amount, which would more than accommodate the commercial world, and I would venture to be d——d, if such a sum would not be subscribed in twenty four hours. This would put all to rights, and I wish it was in my power to subscribe *one* million to so advantageous a concern ; if I had the pleasure of such an one to direct, I should have no doubt of making a very handsome profit by it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he rose to notice the only new point in the discussion, that the time being so distant, the Bank could not make arrangements to complete the business at a shorter period. The answer to this was, that the Bank could not see that clause, without also seeing, that, by the bill, a provision was reserved, by which the House could shorten the duration of the bill, if they judged proper.

Mr. *Dent* thought, that the connexion between the Government and the Bank ought to be prevented, and that the debt of eleven millions should be discharged ; this, he conceived, would go a great way to restore public credit.

In short, nothing could recover the credit of the Bank without a complete divorce from Government, and a limitation to the issue of notes.

Mr. *Harrison* supported the amendment, and the necessity of fixing a short day. He wished to know what was to be done for the relief of individual bankers.

He said, that infinite mischief might arise from parties not being able to pay in cash ; they might lose the benefit of their contracts, and be subjected to the expences of actions, merely because they could not find cash.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that a clause was in preparation for this purpose, and would be presented on the report.

Mr. *Fox* said, that if the 24th of June was named in the bill, and the House, at any shorter period, should think it necessary to stop the farther operation of the provision, and if, under such circumstances, the Bank should petition against that measure, it would certainly be difficult to refuse the prayer of the petition. Another reason for the 1st of May,

in preference to the 24th of June, was, that by that time, probably, the report of the Committee would be brought up, and considered by the House; then the House would be better able to judge what measures were necessary.

Mr. *Vanfittart* said that the first of May would be an inconvenient day, as the small note Bill expired that day.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* thought that monthly discussions upon the subject would be attended with bad effect.

Mr. *Curwen* thought the House should do no more than absolute necessity required. He thought it not right in the first instance to adopt the longest period: it was giving an improper confidence.

The question being loudly called for, the Committee divided:—

<i>Ayes, (For the Amendment)</i>	—	—	88
<i>Noes, (Against it)</i>	—	—	218
	<i>Majority</i>		130

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *March 27.*

The royal assent was given by commission to the American Trade Bill, the Militia Pay and Clothing Bill, and the Scots' Bank Note Bill.

The Commissioners were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Kenyon, and Lord Grenville.

DEBTORS AND CREDITORS.

The Earl of *Moir* rose, in pursuance of the notice he had given, to call their Lordships' attention to a subject, upon which, perhaps, he had troubled the House too often already, viz. to move for an enquiry into the Debtor and Creditor laws. He regretted the absence of the noble and learned Lord who usually sat upon the woolsack, and would not have brought the subject forward on that account, had his intention been to move for any alteration in the existing laws; much more if he meant to have recourse to so bungling a temporary palliative, so clumsy a remedy, as an insolvent bill; a remedy never resorted to without producing a certain degree of inconvenience to trade in general, and material injury to the honest creditor. All he meant was, to move for a Committee to enquire into the laws respecting imprisonment for debt, with a view to ground some practicable proposition upon the report. He considered it as his duty, however, to give some reasons for his present

present proposition. It was an observation of Lord Coke, that laws should be of such a nature as to secure for themselves the most reverential obedience: when laws, therefore, did not produce that effect, it was of importance to enquire how they came to fail in that particular, which was of such consequence to the society for whose benefit they were instituted. The debtor and creditor laws he considered as failing in that particular, and, in order to substantiate his opinion, he appealed to the mode in which arrests by *mesne* process and executions were conducted. He should not enter upon the bankrupt laws, nor other collateral parts of the subject, respecting which he had on former occasions submitted his opinion to their Lordships. The principle he meant to proceed on the House had already admitted, and acted upon, in what was commonly called "The Lords' Act." In the case of arrests by *mesne* process, the unfortunate person who was the subject of the arrest was thrown into gaol, without the debt having been proved, and without being brought to trial for a considerable time; it was notorious that he might lie seven months in prison before the declaration of the plaintiff was given in, and might remain five months longer in gaol before the suit came to a trial; and all this long imprisonment was inflicted merely upon *ex parte* evidence, the prisoner in the mean time having neither provision made by law for his sustenance nor clothing; nay, even after a trial by the existing laws, he could not be liberated, except by suing for his enlargement, which required means not perhaps in his possession. The unfortunate debtor, therefore, in these respects, stood in a much worse situation than the felon accused of the most atrocious crimes. This he stated as a sufficient ground of itself for their Lordships' enquiry, as it must be evident to every person that the greatest abuses might be committed, and the heaviest injuries sustained under this form of the law.

His Lordship next adverted to the state of the law respecting executions, which, he contended, made no difference between the fraudulent and the unfortunate debtor, and which was equally injurious to the interests of the debtor and of the creditor; because a man who had been unfortunate was prevented, by the rigour which might be practised against him, from endeavouring to retrieve his fortune by honest industry, and thereby answering the just demands to which he was liable. It was well known that the creditor often proceeded against the unfortunate debtor to the utmost severity of the law, with a view to torture the compassion of his relations or acquaintances into a subscription for his relief; a species of persecution which,

in

in a well regulated country, certainly ought not to be tolerated. It appeared, from well authenticated documents, that about 130 persons, upon an average, were liberated from gaol every year, by the application of the friends of a charity instituted for that purpose,* who were kept in confinement merely from the want of the means of suing for their groats. This of itself was an evidence of existing grievances, and he hoped would operate as a strong argument with their Lordships to grant the Committee for which he was about to move. It was notorious to every one that the greatest abuses were committed by low attornies, gaolers, and turnkeys, which the law in its present shape could not possibly prevent, and which might not even come to the knowledge of the judges, or reach the ears of those authorized to check and punish such abuses. He believed from his heart that the authors of such abuses were never screened by the noble and learned Lord (Kenyon) now upon the woolsack, and that the aspersions contained against that noble and learned Lord in an anonymous letter which had been sent to him (Lord Kenyon), and which the noble and learned Lord had put into his hand since he came into the House, and permitted him to mention to their Lordships, were scandalous and untrue. There was no man who knew the noble and learned Lord's character, and who could not have observed without admiring the uniform steadiness and integrity of the noble Lord's judicial conduct, who would not join him in that opinion; at the same time all their Lordships must agree, that if abuses did exist, let them be committed by whom they might, they ought to be remedied; and the best mode of remedying them, was to remove the pretext under which they were practised. His Lordship went into some length of detail to shew the urgent necessity of some alteration of the practice which at present obtained under the laws of debtor and creditor; and concluded with moving,

"That a Committee be appointed to enquire into the practice and effect of imprisonment for debt, and to report thereupon to the House."

Lord *Kenyon* rose, with evident agitation, and said, when he came down to the House that day, he did not know whether he should not be dragged to their Lordships' bar as a criminal. He begged their Lordships' indulgence, therefore, while he expressed his injured feelings. It was most true that the personal accusation which had been alluded to in the latter part of the speech of the noble Lord, and which had been con-

* The Society for the discharge of persons imprisoned for small debts.

veyed in an anonymous letter, though it had sometimes assumed a more respectable shape, had been sent to him, and had equally excited his grief and indignation: grief, that there should be a man in the kingdom who should, for a single moment, suppose him capable of the conduct charged upon him in the letter alluded to, and barefaced enough to put such an accusation against him upon paper, without affording him an opportunity of convincing that man, whoever he might be, how absolutely groundless every particle of the accusation was. It called to his recollection a case which had lately come before him in his judicial capacity, in which Mr. Bosanquet, though not called upon to do so, had come forward and vindicated his character from an unjust aspersions of having ever sold any place of emolument, of which he had the patronage as a Director of the East India Company. Though he was not now upon his oath, he spoke under a sense of the duty which he owed both to God and man, and he took this opportunity of solemnly declaring, as he hoped for salvation at the day of judgment from that all-good and beneficent Being, to whom he was to answer for his conduct in this life, that every syllable of the accusation was utterly false and untrue; that he never had received any profit or emolument from the abuses which had been mentioned, and which, in the letter alluded to, were said to be sanctioned by him in his judicial capacity, on account of the profits arising from them, which he was represented as avariciously sharing with gaolers, turnkeys, and others. Under his present feelings, however, he most earnestly begged and beseeched, nay, he implored, the House to appoint a Committee to enquire into his conduct, and he pledged himself (though by the law a man was not obliged to appear against himself) to give evidence before that Committee of what he had now most solemnly asserted. That in the lower departments of the law there were many bad men, who preyed upon the unfortunate, and practised upon the distress and miseries of their fellow-creatures, he knew but too well, and to such men he always opposed himself. After begging pardon of the House for saying so much upon a subject which merely concerned so insignificant an individual as himself, he proceeded to state his objections to the motion; and, in the first place, he laid it down as a principle, quoted from Lord Coke, that credit would be sparingly given where there were not the means of enforcing payment of the debt. He insisted that the law of arrest, as it at present prevailed, had conducted in an essential degree to the encrease of commerce and the extension of trade. That if the security it afforded the creditor was either weak-

ened

ened or diminished, it would produce the most serious consequences, and possibly destroy both the one and the other. The noble Lord had, on a former occasion, proposed a specific plan, which seemed to him to be far preferable to the mode of proceeding now proposed; but that plan was so clumsily drawn up, and pregnant with so many inconveniencies, that it was thrown out of the House. The mode of enquiry by a Committee appeared to him to be infinitely more objectionable, as it would bring the whole code of the laws of the country into discussion, and give rise to the projection of new schemes and plans without end, which could do no good, but which might be productive of an infinite deal of confusion and mischief. His Lordship insisted upon the leniency of the bankrupt laws, which, as they were now executed, afforded protection to the honest but unfortunate debtor. With respect to the delays which had been insisted upon by the noble Lord, he said he had assisted juries in the decision of about a thousand causes annually; and that the delays, when they did arise, were advantageous instead of being injurious to the debtor. It was impossible altogether to prevent abuses; but when they came to his knowledge they should never be countenanced, nor the authors of them suffered to go unpunished, if they could be made amenable to his jurisdiction. He recommended it to the noble Lord not to insist upon the Committee, but, if he meant to persist in his object, to bring forward some proposition in a regular and specific shape, which would no doubt be considered by the House with that fairness and impartiality which was due to every thing coming from such a respectable character. He said, he must leave off where he began, and most earnestly beseech their Lordships to appoint a Committee to enquire into his conduct, that such a miserable man as himself might be relieved from his present feelings, and be enabled to clear his character from most foul and unmerited aspersions.

The Earl of *Morra* said, that he would begin where the noble and learned Lord left off, and deprecate the appointment of any such Committee as the noble and learned Lord desired. He would resist the appointment of such a Committee in the most decided manner. The noble and learned Lord's character, during a long professional life, was too well known, and too much respected, ever to suffer from any malevolent insinuation which might be thrown against it. He was surprised even that the contents of an anonymous letter should have made any impression upon the noble Lord, but he made allowance for his generous and virtuous feelings. If anonymous letters were worthy their Lordships' attention, he could assure them

them he had been honoured with many upon the present subject; some applauding his humanity, though that was not the ground on which he rested his present motion, and others of a directly opposite nature. He had one in his pocket at that very time, signed by a person who denominated himself a *desperate creditor*, who asserted that he saw his intended object, that it would ruin him and his family if the security afforded by the law of arrest was taken away, that he really was what he signed himself, a *desperate creditor*; and if he succeeded in his pursuit, the writer would put him to death. Such, however, was the different impression that the menace made on his mind, that he begged the anonymous letter received by the noble and learned Lord, and that received by him, might *pair off* together, and be heard of no more. His Lordship proceeded to reply to the arguments against his motion; and stated that if the Committee was granted, he should move, after their report was given in, for an Address to his Majesty, to order a Bill to be prepared by the proper persons upon the subject.

Lord *Kenyon* said a few words in reply.

The Earl of *Coventry* declared that, from what he had heard from both the noble Lords, he was convinced that the appointment of the Committee moved for would be highly improper.

After which the House divided.

<i>Contents</i>	—	21
<i>Non Contents</i>	—	37
<i>Majority</i>		16

DIMISSON OF THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY.

The Earl of *Suffolk* rose to address their Lordships, in consequence of the notice he had some time since given, and the motion he had made, for their Lordships to be summoned for that day. He had no doubt he should obtain their indulgence and attention, as it was not often that he ventured to trouble the House. He stood altogether unconnected with any party, and had nothing to ask, nor any thing to expect, and in what he had to offer to their Lordships' consideration, he was actuated solely by a sincere wish to do service to his country. The times were now become so serious, and the situation of the country so truly critical and dangerous, that it became the duty of every man in that House to speak his sentiments freely and fairly upon the subject without reserve.

Two sessions ago, his Lordship said, he took the liberty of offering his opinion relative to the situation of the country,

and his advice then was, that we should boldly look it in the face. He had proposed at that time, that the country should be put in an immediate state of defence; that a very extensive encampment should be formed in a central situation, as well as smaller ones all along the coasts, and that carriages of a particular construction should be provided, ready for the most speedy conveyance of troops, ammunition, stores, and provisions, from one post to another throughout the kingdom, as the exigence of circumstances might require. Since that time great preparations had been talked of as necessary; but little effectual had, in his mind, been done. Much had been said of our naval exertions at all times, and certainly the conduct of our officers and seamen had done them the highest honour; but was proper encouragement given to those who greatly distinguished themselves and achieved exploits meriting the first rewards? That gallant veteran, now no more, (the late Lord Rodney,) in return for one of the most signal victories which ever graced the annals of this country, had been left in a state of poverty, and suffered to be harrassed with law suit after law suit, so that had it not been for the protection afforded by his Peerage, he would, in all likelihood, have ended his days in a gaol. Had not his body been arrested after his death, and been in danger of being denied the rights of burial? His Lordship next took notice of the treatment experienced by Lord Howe, who, in return for as brilliant an action and as glorious a victory as ever was heard of, had received no remuneration whatever, but the thanks of the two Houses of Parliament. Something further, indeed, had been promised him, but was afterwards bestowed elsewhere. He acquitted the noble Duke, whose shoulders were graced with that ribbon which had been once allotted for the gallant and noble officer, of whom he was speaking, of any particular intention to deprive him of this mark of royal favour. He placed it to the account of that Minister, whose whole life, since he became such, had been one continued system of cunning, deceit and duplicity. Another veteran commander who had been in the West-Indies, had received such treatment from Ministers, that on being asked to go out again he refused to do so, unless the king should positively lay his commands on him to go, in which case he must obey his duty, but declared that no consideration should induce him voluntarily to entrust his honour again into the hands of such men as the present Ministers. His Lordship next adverted to the recal of Lord Fitzwilliam from

from Ireland, which he said had been the cause of all the calamities with which that country was at this time afflicted. But the misconduct of Ministers was not only manifest in their management of the domestic concerns of the country, their duplicity and incapacity were equally notorious in every Court of Europe. He should only mention the treaty of Pilnitz, which would redound to their everlasting shame. He dwelt on the impropriety of having formed connections with foreign Courts, by which so much of the wealth of the country was drained away, that it was reduced to a state of bankruptcy. The duplicity of those Courts should have been a sufficient ground to prevent such connections, and particularly that which they displayed to each other. Ministers boasted however, that they had saved the country from French principles. Fatal delusion! Who were those who were accused of entertaining French principles? they were men of the greatest property and the highest honour in the kingdom; he himself had had this gallic creed imputed to him; but what motive could he possibly have for holding such opinions? He had a large estate, and a title which had been conveyed to him through a long line of ancestry, and which he wished to transmit to his posterity. But to what did all this tend? He wished to restore the country to its former state of envied greatness; this however could not be done while the present Minister remained in power. The motion which he was about to make, he was not sanguine enough to hope it would be carried, but he wished that it should be recorded on the Journals of the House, that he had done his duty at this alarming crisis. He should also solicit an audience of his Majesty, and humbly tender to him his advice upon the present state of public affairs, and when he had made this appeal to his sovereign, he should have the satisfaction of having done all which in his individual capacity it was in his power to perform. He concluded with moving for an address to his Majesty, to dismiss the first Lord of the Treasury from his Councils.

Lord Grenville opposed the motion, because the noble Earl did not appear to him to have founded his arguments against the person so particularly pointed out by it, nor against the conduct of administration in general, upon facts sufficiently strong and substantial to bear a motion of that nature. The noble Earl had entered at large into a multifarious series of measures, the complex circumstances of which he had to-

tally mistaken and condemned, without endeavouring to warrant his assertions by any evidence or any proof whatever. Near as he stood in point of relationship, and still nearer in that of friendship, to the distinguished character who was alluded to in the present motion, he was in a great measure precluded from speaking of him, in that manner, which he should do, of any other person of whom he thought so highly. He had no doubt, however, but the many and great services he had rendered his country, were too deeply impressed on the minds of the public, to make it necessary for him to say much on that head. With respect to the argument of the noble Earl who made the motion, it was couched in such very general terms, that it would only be on one or two particular points, that he should have occasion to trouble the House very shortly. So far as his honourable friend was concerned in the neglect or failure of any circumstance tending to promote and benefit the public welfare, he was confident the neglect and failure was attributable only to those errors to which human nature is at all times liable, to those accidents which no human prudence can prevent, or to those dispensations of Providence, which no human wisdom can controul, and not to any inattention, interest, or personal ill-will. One of the first accusations which the noble Earl had brought forward against his hon. friend was a charge of having injured the public cause by removing some officers from the public service, to make room for others more pliant and more useful to his views, on whom he wanted to bestow the public honours and emoluments; and of neglecting to reward the meritorious skill and bravery of others, in the manner which the nation wished for, and their own risk and talents had deserved. Though no man entertained a more liberal or more grateful opinion of the gallant officers alluded to than he did, he hoped their Lordships would suffer him to decline entering into the invidious task of scanning their deserts, and permit him to proceed with examination only of the truth of those declarations respecting them which the noble Earl had that night made. With regard to what had fallen from the noble Earl respecting Lord Rodney, he begged the House to recollect that no part of what was done in the way of remuneration, was at all to be accounted for by the present administration, who were not in office at the time. The pension which was settled on that gallant officer, was given before the present Ministers
came

came in. They had no share in advising or fixing the quantum. They had indeed, on the death of that noble Lord, advised his Majesty to continue the same to his family, and it had been done accordingly, by the consent of Parliament. So far they had been desirous of remembering and rewarding the services of the noble Lord. With regard to the other two instances which the noble Earl had alluded to, he could conscientiously assure their Lordships, he had never heard the anecdotes which the noble Earl related till that evening, and from what he understood of the subject, he was apprehensive the noble Earl laboured under some mistake arising from gross misinformation. With respect to the treaty of Pilnitz, both within and without doors, it had long been a matter of misapprehension and abuse, and like many other transactions had been invidiously misrepresented to calumniate administration, though the fatal consequences of that calumny involved the happiness and tranquillity of the country. He hoped from what he was now going to relate, those misrepresentations would cease, and all further declamation against Ministers for the share they were supposed to have had in the fabrication of that treaty, be disclaimed. The treaty of Pilnitz originated with the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, and was signed, sealed, and ratified without the participation, and even without the knowledge of the British Cabinet. So much for particular articles; in reply to the more broad and general declaration, that such connexions were formed with foreign Courts as drained away the wealth of the country, and reduced it to a state of bankruptcy, he had only to recall their Lordships' recollection to the flourishing state of the finances and resources of the country, to the extent of our commerce, and the receipts of our customs. Some temporary check and embarrassment in the concerns of public credit had been recently experienced it was true, but he conceived it highly improper to involve that circumstance with the present question, especially since it was already in a stage of discussion, upon the result of which their Lordships would hereafter be called to decide. But to refer to the connections which subsist between Great Britain and foreign powers, whatever might be the alledged duplicity and perfidy of those powers, the truth of which, if necessary perhaps, he might be likely in some degree at least to dispute, he trusted there could be no doubt, no difficulty, no dispute, concerning the integrity and candour of Great Britain, her faith and honour were never higher, never
much

much revered and relied on as at the present moment. He now came to the consideration of the conduct of the war. That the allies had not been so successful as they might not only have hoped for, but expected, he was ready to admit; and that such accidents as are incidental to all wars, and which it was scarcely possible to avoid, had happened, he was also ready to admit; but whatever might be the misfortunes of the allies, he hoped and trusted all parties would allow that the exertions of this country had been unparalleled in the page of history, and that they had been attended with unparalleled success. Our naval victories were more brilliant than ever before distinguished any age or any country, and therefore it appeared peculiarly hard that all the honour, all the praise, and all the glory, should be reaped by individuals, while all the censure, all the shame, and all the responsibility, was thrown on Ministers. Let the success of the war, however, be what it might, he was convinced, and relied on the conviction of their Lordships and the country also, that if the war had not been undertaken, the religion of the country would by this time have been overthrown; the laws, our pride and protection, have been trampled on; the sacred institutions of our ancestors destroyed, all rank, property, and distinction, laid waste, and our glorious Constitution totally extinct.

Lord *Hay* (Earl Kinnoul) said, that he was never more surprised than on the present occasion, to see a motion of this important nature, no less than for removing the Prime Minister of the country from his high station, without one single charge or proof whatever brought against him. He considered the country by no means in so bad a situation as many timid people apprehended. He praised the conduct of the war, and said, that the brilliant successes we had met with far surpassed those of any former war. With regard to what had been said of Lord Rodney's remuneration, he was not a little astonished to hear it. In the first place, the present Ministers were not in office in 1782, and he could answer for it that Lord Rodney's family were perfectly satisfied with the provision that had been made for them since Lord Rodney's death. He should therefore give the motion his decided negative.

The Earl of *Suffolk* desired to retract part of what he had said relative to Lord Rodney. He believed the pension was rightly stated by the noble Lord. Still, however, it was certain that brave officer was afterwards, from a variety of law suits, reduced to a state of great poverty, and his body for a considerable time seized upon, and denied the rights of burial. When he asked for papers, which were necessary to defend himself

himself, Ministers refused to let him have them. His Lordship also quoted, from memory, a short passage from a pamphlet published on that occasion, addressed to the people, in which the author says, "Can you bear to see the laurelled hand of your BELISARIUS stretched out, and begging to you for bread!"

The Marquis of *Lansdown* stated, that he could answer for it, that when it was in contemplation to reward Lord Rodney for his brilliant action on the 12th of April, 1782, every thing that was handsome and liberal was meant to be done for him. With respect to the papers that the noble Earl alluded to, he had often heard of them, but had never been able to discover what they were.

The Duke of *Norfolk* said, the noble Secretary of State had contended, that the system which Ministers had pursued had preserved the laws and Constitution of this country. He wished that this assertion was confirmed by the state of the country; and he was afraid that, if Ministers were still to obtain the blind confidence they had so long possessed, the time might come when we might find we had lost both our laws and constitution. It was said, that no ground was stated for the present motion. In answer to that objection, there needed no argument. It was enough to say in the words of the inscription over the celebrated architect of St. Paul's, "*si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*" The grounds of the motion were to be found on every side, and in every part of our situation; they were to be found in our alliances, where our former confederates were leagued with our enemies; they would be found in the whole conduct of the war, in the state of our finances, and, above all, in the situation of public credit, so fatally wounded by the measures of Ministers.

The Marquis *Townshend* spoke against the motion. He said, the country was by no means in a dangerous situation; and contended that the war had been carried on with the most brilliant successes. That on all former occasions, during the continuance of war, the funds were very low; and he was surprised to hear noble Lords speak in such desponding terms of the situation of our affairs.

The Earl of *Warwick* said, he rose to trouble their Lordships with a few words only; but before he proceeded further, he begged to explain an expression, which he had been told had fallen from him in the hurry of debate, the last time he had the honour to intrude upon their Lordships, and which certainly might be understood in a very different and more extensive sense than he meant to apply it. He had made use of an expression,

expression, "the *desperate* situation of the country." Undoubtedly he did not despair of the country, or think its situation desperate; he merely meant to speak of it as an arduous situation, and a situation of *danger*; and he was the more desirous to be correctly understood in this particular, because he was convinced that gloomy and exaggerated representations of the state of the country given in Parliament were attended with the worst effects in the distant parts of the kingdom, and tended to dispirit the people, to check their exertions for the defence of our coasts, and to diminish that zeal which they otherwise were all inclined to manifest with becoming earnestness and sincerity. He lamented therefore extremely that noble Lords of great talents and great authority, should think it prudent and well timed to come down to that House merely to draw dark pictures, and give a desponding account of our situation. When he said this, he declared, he did not impute improper motives to any noble Lords, but he cautioned the House against the use of exaggerated expressions with regard to our situation, which could only serve to raise the hopes and pretensions of the enemy. There was a French party in this country, and it was possible that there might be a French party in parliament. Such pictures, therefore, as he had alluded to, could only serve to animate hostile dispositions. If there was any just ground of complaint, he was convinced that the people would obtain their right, if they made their complaints known in a lawful and constitutional manner. But it was not the proper way to solicit with arms in their hands. Such was the manner in which the Irish insisted upon the redress of their grievances. The Earl said, he did not view our situation on the dark side which some liked to contemplate. Changes in dress had lately been introduced in that House, and some might wish to have a Crop Administration. He saw no reason, however, to prefer any set of men to another on so frivolous an account. He should therefore vote against the motion.

The Earl of *Derby* said, the noble Earl had warned the House against painting our situation in strong colours; for his part, when he felt the country to be in danger, he considered it his duty to remonstrate and to guard against the evils it might produce by looking at it fairly, and stating it without reserve. He was apt to speak warmly, when he felt occasion, but he hoped he should express himself in decent and parliamentary language, consistent with the respect
due

due to their Lordships. He should, therefore, notwithstanding the noble Earl's caution, continue to reprobate the misconduct and incapacity of Ministers, in as strong terms as he thought ought to be applied to them. It had been insisted on by the noble Secretary of State, and other noble Lords, that no proofs had been brought forward, nor no reasons given as the grounds of the present motion. He did not conceive it to be necessary to state particular reasons for such a motion. The notoriety of the circumstances superceded the necessity of detail. It was said that a people with arms in their hands did not deserve any favour; but had not the conduct of administration, fomented the discontents of the people of Ireland, and by the provocations they had given irritated their minds to the present alarming degree? Could the distress of the country now be compared to that of any former period? Or could it be imputed entirely to accidental circumstances. Was it not rather the natural and necessary consequence of the profuse expenditure, and the accumulated debt which the administration had occasioned. Was it inflammatory to impute to the Ministers the dangerous situation of the country, to tax the system they pursued, and to say that the bankruptcy of the Bank of England was to be charged to their account? He considered the cause of these disasters to be with Ministers, and he therefore gave his decided support to the motion.

Lord Romney said, that for several months past, it had given him the greatest concern to hear persons on all sides, both within the walls of that House and without, talk of the situation of the country in the most desponding manner. For his own part, he thought very differently of it, and was certain there was nothing wanted to restore it to his former strength and power, but active energy. He had argued on this head with many of his friends in vain, till at length he was obliged to tell them in a laughing way, "well, enjoy the comfort of being ruined, if you will have it so." He nevertheless regretted the expressions used with regard to our situation. as they were calculated to produce no good effect here, while they were received with pleasure on the other side of the water. He thought the situation of the country not worse than it had been at the end of last war, and before. Our allies had lost, but we had gained in the contest. He did not see any cause of apprehension. With regard to the conduct there might have been some faults, but great allowance should be made for the extraordinary nature

nature of the war, and the desperate efforts of the enemy. Perhaps it would have been as well to rely for defence upon our wooden walls. He thought that the Minister should have carried the loyalty loan a little farther; for he was convinced that a great deal more might have been subscribed, which would have prevented the present difficulties, and been of the utmost importance in inclining the enemy to pacific measures. If the country were really harrassed and distressed in any thing like the manner described, he conceived to be the duty of every Englishman to contribute his assistance to relieve it. He had a plan to suggest which he was convinced would be of great advantage; it might be considered absurd and quixotical, and he might be laughed at and ridiculed for having thought of it; he would nevertheless submit it as it had occurred to his mind. He thought that every man ought to come forward and contribute a voluntary gift, to the extent of his ability to the public exigency. He himself would subscribe 5000l.; and, he thought there would easily be found a hundred thousand individuals, who would subscribe their 100l., so that upon a moderate computation, 10 millions might be obtained.

He proposed that this should be paid by installments. For instance, he would commence on the 1st day of January, 1798, and pay 500l. a month, so that in ten months he should have paid the whole. Each subscriber to do the same, according to the sums respectively subscribed, even so low as 50l. The whole of this money to be disposeable by and subject to the controul of parliament, such a measure, if carried into execution, would convince the enemy of the spirit and resources of the country, and would counteract any impression which might be made on the French government to our disadvantage, by the desponding ideas of some as to our situation, or by the warm language of others on the conduct or mismanagement of our Ministers. With regard to the motion, he should certainly give it his negative.

The Earl of *Derby* apologized for troubling the House again, but an expression of the noble Earl who spoke last, he said, obliged him to notice it. He was certain the noble Earl did not mean it, but from some of the words used by his Lordship, they might carry an insinuation against him, which he utterly disclaimed. He meant that of giving the smallest degree of encouragement to the hopes of the French, by the warmth of expression he had used either on the mismanagement of Ministers, or the deplorable state of our affairs. He had forgot to notice one part of the noble Earl's

(Warwick)

(Warwick) speech, when he was up before, and which he now begged leave to observe upon. The noble Earl had said, that there was a French faction, or men entertaining French principles in this country, and perhaps in one or other of the Houses of parliament. As that noble Earl had found fault with the motion then in debate, because there was no specific charge in it, he was surprised that he himself should make use of such an insinuation. Surely, if the noble Earl knew of any such faction, it would be his duty to name the persons, and make a direct charge, otherwise his objection to the present motion, for want of a specific charge fell to the ground. Indeed it was altogether unfounded. If the noble Earl who made the motion had exhibited articles of impeachment against the Minister, then he must have stated specific charges, and proved them afterwards; but for the purpose for which it is intended, the present motion was certainly very sufficient.

Lord *Romney* assured the noble Earl who spoke last, that he meant no personal allusion to him. On the contrary, he said, he always had thought his Lordship remarkably guarded and cautious in his language, and equally temperate and respectful.

Lord *Rawdon* (Earl of Moira) said, that the present was not a case where it was necessary to substantiate very particular charge, as if it were a specific accusation; nor was there any injustice in proceeding upon general grounds, because it was not acting an unfair part to withdraw confidence from those who were no longer deemed worthy of it. Many of the arguments used against the motion struck his mind as the strongest reasons that could be urged for its adoption. That the present was a period of the utmost difficulty and danger, no man would dare to deny. To apply the remedy to our distress, the extent of it ought to be ascertained. It would not do to hide the difficulties that were to be encountered from ourselves or from the country. The whole hope of salvation which remained, was to infuse confidence into the public mind, and this could only be done by candid and manly conduct. He considered the difficulty of our situation to be great, but he saw no reason to despond. Our distress, indeed, was great beyond example, but our resources were great likewise. To meet so great an exigence, the confidence of the people must be restored. Ninety-nine out of a hundred, he was sure were sensible of the extent our resources, and were capable of judging of

them ; but could they have confidence in those Ministers who, possessing those resources, and with a liberality of expence beyond all former precedent, have reduced the country to its present situation? How then was this distress and this difficulty incurred? Look to the management of finance, to the military conduct Ministers had pursued. We commenced the war with all Europe for our allies, and with finances unimpaired. Our fleets and armies were every where victorious, and with all this success, if the Ministers were not to blame, how come we in our present situation? Belgium was lost, Holland and Spain and other allies converted into enemies, Ireland in a state of almost actual insurrection, and the nation become bankrupt! The schemes of finance with which the Minister had deluded the nation, had prepared the way for this catastrophe. The statements of the expences of the war had been calculated to impose upon the country, and to conceal our situation. What had been the consequence? The Bank of England had stopped payment, and its credit could never be restored to that state in which it previously stood, because the act of Council having once been taken, there was no security that it would not be repeated. What had been the result of their military conduct? How with that plenitude of resource which they possessed, was our situation so difficult and embarrassed? The noble Lord had proposed a subscription, but would the people subscribe when the present Ministers were to manage it with the same prodigality, and in the same unprofitable manner which they had already manifested, not to mention how far the House of Commons, would approve of money being raised for public purposes through any medium but their own. In the conduct of the war, they had spent the strength of the country in distant expeditions, in attacking the skirts of the French power, in making conquests in the East and West-Indies, while, if they were really combating French principles, they must have been aware that they had no chance for success, but in a different mode of contest. If a wild beast was abroad, was it of important use or conducive to our reputation to have got behind it, and cut off a piece of its tail? His Lordship reprobated the whole conduct of the war, and concluded with declaring that he should give his most decided support for the removal of Ministers who had afforded such proofs of incapacity, and whose measures had reduced the country to its present state.

Lord *Romney* said, that he was sufficiently acquainted with the

the privileges of the House of Commons, to know that the proposal he suggested, must be carried into effect by their authority, and he expressly stated that the amount of the subscription should be subject to the controul of Parliament, and disposable by Parliament.

Earl *Spencer* said, that before any charge of blame could be brought home to Ministers, it was necessary to prove that the expence which had been incurred had been occasioned by their misconduct. To move for the dismissal of Ministers was to imply a charge which ought previously to be established. No opportunity had been neglected to put an end to the war, and it was proved that its continuance was to be ascribed to the ambition of the enemy. The Earl said, he would not enter into an examination of military affairs, but he would venture to assert that the naval power of this country had never been signalized more conspicuously than during the present contest.

The Earl of *Carlisle* said, he never would hear an assertion that implied that the Board of Admiralty had on every occasion done its duty, without rising and replying that Ministers had lost the most favourable opportunity of putting an end to the war, in not having given orders to admiral Colpoys, if he missed the French fleet, to proceed to Ireland. Had this been done, and had the French armament been destroyed, in his opinion it would have been followed by an immediate peace.

Earl *Spencer* defended the conduct of Ministers with regard to the orders given to admiral Colpoys.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* declared he completely agreed with the noble Earl (Lord Carlisle) with regard to the conduct of Ministers upon the occasion alluded to. He thought the Admiralty had been extremely negligent of their duty and highly to blame. He should say a few words likewise to the subject immediately before the House. He confessed that he had no confidence in a mere change of men. He considered one punishment of a Minister, where it was merited, of infinitely greater public advantage than any change that could take place. He had formed this opinion both on principle and practice. He was for a strong executive and a vigilant independent legislature, mutually checking each other, and in this balance he conceived liberty to consist. The history of the changes that had taken place from the removal of Sir Robert Walpole to the present day, had proved the inefficacy of changes of men. Sir Robert Walpole was removed by popular clamour

clamour at the time he was carrying that admirable scheme, the Sinking Fund, into execution, and the country suffered by his removal. The consequence of that change was, his successors plunged the nation into a Spanish and a French war, and dilapidated the Sinking Fund. At the close of the seven years war, a change also took place, and the new Minister squandered 75 millions of the public money in carrying on the very measures he had reprobated when out of place. At the end of the American war, violent clamours had been raised against the peace that was concluded, which time had proved to be ill founded, and the person who had been most forward in that clamour would probably have come into office as one of the most popular Ministers that ever was in this country, but for the coalition with Lord North, which then took place. With him, therefore, a change of men was not that panacea which some considered it to be. He was for a fundamental change of system; he was for a complete acknowledgment of past error. He was for a government, conducted without influence, and whoever were Ministers, if they had integrity, honour, and purity, he was not doubtful of the result. The Marquis alluded to the affairs of Ireland, and severely reprobated the sentiment of those in the Irish Parliament, who had expressed a wish that the north of Ireland were in a state of open rebellion, a wish similar to that of the Duke d'Alva, one of Philip the Second's generals, when sent to the Netherlands, who were contending for liberty against the tyranny of Spain; the Duke declared himself amazed to find the people so quiet, and wished they had been in open rebellion that he might have exercised his power of crushing them. He desired their Lordships to look at the account of army extraordinaries on the table, and asked what their property could long remain worth, when millions after millions were squandered in the most improvident manner? What would the noble Lord's subscription of 5000l. do, when such a floodgate was opened, and when every man in office had his hand in the public purse to spend as much as he thought proper. The term, good peace, was frequently used, but he wished it could be defined. He wished to know what we are fighting for? Is it Belgium? If it is, ask the country whether they will persevere in this war for such an object. Is it for any territorial possession? He wished it to be discussed what terms would constitute a good peace. When this was known, it might be possible to proceed. He could

could never consent to any peace that would infer public ignominy, and if the enemy were to insist on any such conditions, it would unite every man in the country to resist their pretensions.

Lord *Grenville* began by saying, his noble relation had so ably stated the situation and resources of the country, that he should not touch on that subject. He then entered into a defence of the Admiralty with regard to the Brest fleet. Having recapitulated most of the arguments urged by Lord Spencer in a late debate on that subject, he declared he was surprised to hear the argument used by the noble baron (Lord Rawdon), with regard to the manner in which our strength had been employed. It used to be the great argument that every thing ought to be rested on our naval exertions, but here the noble Lord had blamed Ministers because they had not preferred continental war. The natural part for England to take in the war had been properly performed. Every effort had been made, and every success obtained, regarding this as a naval and colonial war. When the exertions of the government were turned towards the Continent, when all the troops our small military establishment could afford, were sent to the Netherlands, then Ministers were blamed for not confining their exertions to the navy and the colonies, which it was said were the proper objects of Great Britain in a war. Of late, Ministers in compliance with the public voice had declined sending troops to the Continent, they had turned all their attention to the navy and colonies, and still they were blamed (by Lord Moira) even though they had been so successful, and their Lordships were asked if it conduced to our reputation to have taken the French monster behind, and cut off a part of its tail? Were our victories at sea, and our conquests in the East and West-Indies, no more than the end of the monster's tail, and were they to be so degraded by the most humiliating comparison? The noble Marquis had allowed that changes of Ministers, made by popular clamour, had not always been calculated for the public good, and he had instanced the case of Sir Robert Walpole; that change, Lord Grenville affirmed, was not less calculated for the public good than the present. But the noble Marquis says, it is not a change of men, but an entire change of the principle and system of the government he desires. A change in our system of government would throw the country into total and immediate confusion. Were not their Lordships convinced of the danger of French principles from which Ministers

nisters had preserved the country? From such a change he was convinced the whole nation would recoil. It had been asked, for what was the war carried on? It was not for this or that province, it was, whether the French should possess the whole of the maritime coast of the Continent opposite to this country. That was the present object. Another was, the haughty manner in which they had treated our overtures for peace. They had called for our terms, which they had rejected without offering any on their part. No Minister had ever been more ignominiously treated than ours had been. His Lordship declared he had often heard professions of unanimity when the country was insulted; but he never had received the support of those who made the professions. His Lordship condemned the desponding language which some men held respecting our finances, and he contended that our resources were ample and abundant.

The Marquis of *Lansdown* declared, he was not surprised the French in the late negotiation had shewn some haughtiness. The French were men with natural feelings, and must remember and resent the abusive language Ministers had used respecting them on all occasions. Were we to wonder that the French entered on the negotiation with coldness and distrust, when not only the former language of Ministers, but every circumstance attending the negotiation, itself gave them cause to suspect our sincerity? The Marquis said he would not suffer an imputation of Jacobinism to be cast on him, by the noble Lord, when that noble Lord must know that by a recommendation of a change of system, he meant nothing like Jacobinism. He denied having recommended a change of government. He only desired the present system should be changed for a constitutional system. And he would contend for a constitutional government, even though it was the fashion for Ministers to insinuate, that those who recommended any change were Jacobins. He denied having any Jacobin principles about him, and asserted that he had always advised Ministers against Jacobin principles, because he was convinced they went beyond an Agrarian, they went to a community of goods, and every absurd and pernicious degree of equality. He declared he had read a book on that subject, and he was astonished to find what a jingle of fine words might be brought to bear in defence of a subject founded in the most absurd casuistry and delusion. He did not believe there were many Jacobins in principle in this country; and he knew of no such practical Jacobins as
his

his Majesty's Ministers. They had banished gold and silver from London, at the time they began to be plenty in Paris, and they had taken up the paper system at the time France had laid it down. Forced loans, military force, and every Jacobin project they had adopted as France rejected them. They pursued a line of conduct perfectly agreeable to all Jacobins, and well calculated to promote their objects. The Marquis thought the immortal jury of 1794 had sufficiently exposed the falsehood of the pretended Jacobin plots. To the noble conduct of that jury, he did not know how many of their Lordships were now indebted for the possession of their lives and fortunes. It was that jury which defeated the Robespierian system, which was attempted to be established in this country.

The Duke of *Bedford* said that he would support the necessity of a change of system and of principle in spite of the calumnies which he knew he would incur. It was his object to chase corruption from senates, and despotic principles from the councils of kings. The danger of French principles was held out, but, good God! was it the way, to guard against French principles, to ruin our own country? It had often been said that Ministers had no interest in continuing the war. But it might be said that it never was the interest of individuals to commit errors. Ministers might feel an individual interest in continuing that system with which their power was connected. The state of the finances was alarming in the highest degree, but the danger could only be remedied by meeting it fairly. Were a peace now to take place, he would undertake to prove that taxes to the amount of two millions and a half would be necessary to cover the expences already incurred. He declined going into the detail of these subjects at present, but should give his hearty assent to the motion.

The House then divided—

<i>Contents</i>	—	15	
<i>Proxies</i>	—	2—	17
<i>Not-Contents</i>	—	86	
<i>Proxies</i>	—	18—	104
		<i>Majority</i>	87

The Earl of *Oxford* gave notice of a motion respecting *Protests* next Thursday, and moved that the House be summoned on that day.

Adjourned.

VOL. II. 1797.

4 B

HOUSE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *March 27.*

Mr. Alderman *Anderson* moved, that the act which regulates the price of bread according to the returns of the price of wheat, flour, &c. be read; which being done, he stated a great number of very unworthy practices which are constantly made use of to keep up the price of corn on the day at which the return is made, by which the price of bread is regulated, whereby the magistrates of the city were very much imposed upon, and suggested the necessity of many fresh regulations, which the magistrates of the city were not empowered by law to make, and concluded with moving, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to explain, amend, and render more effectual the said Act." Granted.

Mr. *Ryder* brought up a Bill to regulate, under certain conditions, the laws now in force relative to the exportation of corn, &c. which was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time the next day.

Mr. *Abbot* postponed the consideration of the report of the Committee to consider of the best means for promulgating the statutes, until that day se'nnight, on account of the pressure of business, which rendered it impossible for the printer to be ready with a sufficient number of copies of the report.

Colonel *Porter* postponed his motion relative to the borough of Southwark to some future day, on account of a case now before the House, which was similar to that of the Borough. He did not wish to bring forward any proposition in the House, the determination of which might affect the opinion of a Committee upon that point. He should have intimated his intention sooner, had he received earlier information of the case to which he alluded.

BANK BILL.

Mr. *Hobart* brought up the report of the Committee on the Bank Bill. The amendments being read,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he had a clause to offer, on the subject of which a great deal had been said in the course of the discussion of this Bill, from which he collected there would be no difference of opinion with regard to the clause; he meant a clause providing that Bank notes should be received in payment by the collectors in every branch of the revenue. He had another clause, to which he solicited the attention of the House, the subject matter of which had undergone a considerable share of discussion in the progress of the present Bill;

on

on that clause he wished gentlemen to deliver their opinion, for it went to regulate, to a certain extent, the mode in which Bank notes should be received in individual transactions. This was a matter of great importance, and it could not be too much canvassed. The regular mode of proceeding, as he understood it, would be, that the Bill be recommitted, in which purpose he should bring up the clauses, the purport of which he had thus shortly opened.

The *Speaker* observed, that if the Bill should be recommitted, every member would of course be at liberty in that Committee to propose any clause, and therefore the regular form of the motion should be, "That this Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of receiving such additional clauses as may be offered."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* having made his motion in that form, the House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then proposed his first clause, That the collectors of the public revenue, &c. shall receive in payment Bank notes, &c. That this clause shall be made part of this Bill during the continuance of the restriction on the Bank not to issue cash, &c. Agreed to.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then proposed the other clause. As it related to a matter of considerable importance, he wished the attention of the Committee to be directed to it. He should, as clearly and concisely as he could, explain the substance of the clause he was about to offer to the consideration of the Committee. It had reference to the situation of persons who may offer, in payment of their debts, Bank notes, who may have no means of paying their debts in cash. He begged it to be understood, that the clause did not go the length of making Bank notes a legal tender, nor to take away the power of the creditor to pursue in the course of legal process means to obtain payment of his demand in cash. The whole substance of the clause was this: if any man offered a Bank note in payment of a demand, that offer should do away the effect of a personal arrest in the first instance. The other process of the law should take its course to the attainment of judgment, as if this clause had never been projected, in the same manner as when any man sues for his debt without arresting the person of his debtor. It only saved the holder of a Bank note from the inconvenience of giving bail to action upon depositing the Bank note. The condition of the creditor would be this: that the Bank note shall stand as a security for his demand until he shall, in the due course of law, obtain his judgment.

ment. Which when we consider the probable effect of the general feeling which he was glad to observe had gone abroad, and which was manifested by the resolutions of different opulent societies to receive Bank notes as cash in payment, would be a good security to the creditor in the course of his legal process, without even binding him eventually to take it after he shall have obtained his judgment for the debt.

The clause was brought up and read a first time: upon the question for the second reading,

Mr. *Fox* said, he did not rise to object to this clause. Without pretending to be learned in cases of legal subtlety, he might venture to alledge that he was not one of those who admired the policy of an arrest in the first instance, in order to obtain payment of a demand. He did not agree with those who thought that the most efficacious mode of ultimately suiting the convenience of even the creditor, to say nothing of the interest of the debtor. He meant only to state a few observations on the subject, as it presented itself in a general view. It must be obvious to the Committee, that when men received in payment of their demands a Bank note, they received that which they were not accustomed to receive, namely, that sort of paper for which, when they pleased, they might have money. This was leaving to a man no choice as to the mode in which he was to be paid, or even in which he was to have security for the payment of his demand. This was a case, for which, perhaps, there was no remedy, and we were left only in a condition to lament it. If one man had a demand upon another for 1000*l.* and he proceeded against him, he could, under this clause, have no other security than that of a Bank note; a very good security he hoped it would be, but then if he took it, and owed another the same sum, and that other did not chuse to take it, he must incur the penalty which would attend the litigation of that demand. All this was a serious evil to every person who should have the misfortune to be involved in it. He wished the Committee to consider the case fully, for he was much afraid we should soon be under the necessity of carrying the case further; and it was impossible to foresee what effect the whole of these might ultimately have upon the public credit. We were brought into a situation in which difficulties would every day be more numerous, and our remedies every day fewer and fewer. What conclusion did he draw from all this? That we should fix, for the whole of the operation of this Bill, as short a duration as possible. He did not pretend to say that any thing he had now advanced were
to

to be considered as arguments ; he offered them merely as suggestions.

Mr. *Huffey* was glad that Bank notes were not proposed to be made legal tenders, because the mischief of that would be obvious. What he was going to state, he did with the best motive in the world, that of serving his country. Of the propriety of his measure the Committee should judge. It was upon the best authority in the country, Adam Smith. He said, that "the funded debt of a nation was the source of capital," and in that view he also took it. He did not agree with those who talked of the necessity of increasing the circulating medium of a country, without considering the real wealth of that country. No medium, whether countenanced by Government or not, was worth any thing, but as it was the representative of real wealth. All other representatives were really worth nothing, and depending upon them would only delude us. He had nothing to say against the Directors of the Bank, nor any thing at present upon the circumstances which brought us into our present situation. His object was to devise means by which we might have a chance of getting out of it as speedily as possible. Their object then appeared to him to be that of aiding the circulation of valid paper, which was founded on a solid security, namely, the pledge of the national faith to the proprietor of the funds. He therefore proposed, that any man possessing 100*l.* in the *three per cents.* or any other sum, should have, to that amount, by applying at the Bank, an authentic document of the value of his property at the fair marketable price of it at the time of the application, which would enable any man to raise money upon the most solid security. This appeared to him to be the way to aid trade, for, by this, activity might be given to a capital of four hundred millions of funded property. What he had suggested might be deemed a foolish plan ; but, as he thought it otherwise, he conceived he had done his duty by submitting it to the consideration of the Committee.

Sir *Francis Baring* doubted very much whether those who brought forward this Bill understood the extent of the operation it would have. A vast large mass of the circulating property in this country was applicable to the payment of foreign bills of exchange, for which the present Bill was not at all adapted. What was a party to do on whom a foreign bill of exchange was drawn, payable in gold and silver, when that bill became due ? If he had nothing but Bank notes, his bill would be protested for non-payment. The event would go abroad ; the bill would be returned as having been dishonoured, and the credit

credit of the party would be gone for ever. One individual might have a thousand of these bills (and this was not over-stating the matter); what was to be done in such case? He was not stating a thing that was merely likely to happen, for there were many persons interested in its happening, and who in the course of their profession derived advantages from the publication of it, namely, those who had a commission to note and protest bills for non-payment. This was a thing which ought to be attended to very seriously, for it affected the whole of our foreign trade. He saw no means by which this evil could be avoided, but by making Bank notes a legal tender.

Mr. *Dent* wished to make Bank notes a legal tender, as long as the suspension of payments at the Bank in cash lasted. He suggested also the propriety of limiting the issue of Bank notes. Where could there be any harm in such limitation? It had been said, however, that there were not issued notes enough. Suppose that issue to be increased. Would it not be so much longer before the suspension at the Bank could be removed?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that it had hitherto been understood that Bank notes should not be made legal tender, if it was possible for us to meet our difficulty without it. No man could pretend to say what might eventually be necessary, but he thought that such a measure should not be agitated at present; and he was happy that, now it was a month since the Order in Council had been issued, it had been attended with many great advantages. He had therefore hoped the honourable Gentleman, who was so deeply interested in this Bill, would not now press a matter that was obviously wished to be avoided by all parts of the House. He believed there was no jealousy respecting Bank notes. He thought that the issue of them had been very beneficial to commerce since the temporary suspension of the payment in cash by the Bank. He wished the Committee to be satisfied there was no necessity for going farther than was now proposed. He had the pleasure to add, that the bankers were perfectly satisfied with the clause which was now before the Committee, as it gave them as much security as they desired to have; to go further at present he thought would be imprudent.

Mr. *Fox* agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Committee should not go to any length that was not necessary in forcing the circulation of paper. But as to the jealousy of Bank notes, he thought they could not be free from that sort of jealousy which attended the issuing them, when it was known that no cash was to be expected in exchange for them at the Bank until the expiration of the present Bill: no other
jealousy

jealousy did he presume to say attached to them. As to the time when the Bill expired, whether then cash would be had for them at the Bank, that was entirely matter of conjecture, upon which at present there neither was nor could be any evidence before the Committee. The necessity which produced the first Order in Council might produce its continuance beyond the period of the present bill; and therefore, upon the ground of public security, there was nothing to rest upon. He must therefore repeat what he had often alleged, that there never would be any security for the country until its credit should be restored. He had no difficulty in saying, that if it were possible for them the next day to have the choice whether we should get thirty or forty millions in specie, to enable the bank to pay in cash all the notes that were issued; or have no more specie than we have at present, but be able to restore public credit, he should prefer the restoration (if that were possible) of public credit to the influx of such an immense quantity of wealth. That restoration of credit was not to be obtained by wealth, but by confidence; that wealth would, when acquired, be devoted to the payment of the public creditor, in preference to advancing it to government. The public should have some pledge of that kind before their confidence would return.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* alluded to the principle laid down by Mr. Fox, that the short duration of the Bill would be the best means of enabling the Bank to resume their operations. He certainly agreed that the object of the Committee ought to be to make the period as short as possible, and the only point was, what was the period which ought to be fixed in the first instance. For his own part, he felt that the shortest possible time would be most proper, but he also felt that to make the period short, would be to defeat the purpose which the Committee had in view. There was only one more part of the right hon. Gentleman's speech upon which he wished to animadvert. It was asserted that the Bank possessed the power of a compulsory issue of paper, which they had no means of converting into cash. This he denied. The Bank, when they increased their notes increased them either on money, or solid securities deposited with them. The taking of them was voluntary, and therefore to such increase the persons who recovered the notes were parties.

Mr. Fox stated a case; a man might deposit 100*l.* in the bank. He might want money, and he must now take notes
for

for it. The receiving of them, therefore was compulsory upon him.

Mr. *Dent* spoke in explanation.

Mr. *Hobhouse* said, it was strange, indeed, if the bankers were satisfied with the clause which protected them merely from arrest, and which did not prevent any pettyfogging attorney from striking a docket against them. He confessed himself to be dissatisfied with the idea of making notes a legal tender; that would increase not diminish the evil. Again, he expressed his astonishment at the satisfaction said to be entertained by the bankers, and he owned he did feel inclined to suppose, that they were only satisfied, because they found they could get no more.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* stated, that the bankers had had the clause laid before them, and that they were satisfied with it. He had been one of the Committee of bankers, and he could with certainty declare this to be their opinion.

Sir *Francis Baring* quoted Mr. Adam Smith's account of the Ayr bank. That bank by the issue of paper, had encouraged projectors and speculators of all kinds; they issued more paper than Scotland could circulate: the consequence was, that it came back upon them almost as soon as it was issued, and their notes only, at the short distance of Dumfries, bore a discount of three and four per cent.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* paid high respect to the labours of Doctor Smith, but denied the applicability of the quotation to the present subject. The Chancellor of the Exchequer contended, that the issuing of paper, if restrained within its due limits, was productive of the best advantages; but more should not be issued than the country required: thus the example of the Ayr bank did not apply on the present case. The only limits that ought to circumscribe the accommodation of the bank, were, in his opinion, the extent of the scale of commerce, and the nature of the securities on which accommodations should be granted. They should, therefore, be restricted only within the capital of the bank, and on due and solid security.—These were the rules on which the bank had hitherto acted; nor was there any thing in the present measure which required any laxation of them.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that, as the dividends of the public creditor were now to be paid in bank notes only, it was natural to suppose, that such payment would ask and require a larger circulation of paper, than when they might have been paid partly, or entirely, in specie. This issue of paper must

must therefore increase daily, as long as the present restriction continued to operate on the bank.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* could not think, that what the honourable Gentleman alluded to, would, in the least, make an immediate issue of fresh notes necessary, as the revenue would be daily receiving paper, and that paper would be as regularly returning to the bank.

Mr. *Hobhouse* referring to what he had before observed, said, he believed it would be found that a refusal by bankers to pay in specie, and remaining two months on bail, would amount to an act of bankruptcy: at all events, if he was mistaken in that idea, bankers would certainly be liable to be prosecuted and put to considerable expence.

Mr. *Hussey* was sorry that no gentleman had condescended to take notice of the observations he had ventured to throw out. If the Committee would but reflect, they could not but see, that it was very hard that the bank should receive interest from government for the money which the public creditor had entrusted to their hands, while the real proprietor of it was deprived of the advantage. He still thought that the holders of stock should receive dividends from the bank equivalent to the property they possessed in the funds: for such funds would be the representatives of real property, and as such held out solid and sufficient security; and it was paper of that nature that should be brought into circulation, as the real assets of the country.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* professed himself always happy to hear the observations of every gentleman, especially on an emergency like the present; and he was particularly happy in being able to collect the ideas of a gentleman so eminently conversant with financial subjects as the honourable gentleman who spoke last. The plan, however, which was suggested by that honourable gentleman, would, in his mind, come more naturally, or properly, under discussion, when the House should be in possession of the report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the causes that produced the necessity of the late minute of Council. All he would now observe, was, that the paper alluded to by the honourable gentleman (Mr. *Hussey*) would not be more easily convertible into cash than the bank notes; nor would it be a better representative of real value: for the one was assuredly not more fictitious than the other.

Mr. *Hussey* disclaimed any intention of applying the epithet "fictitious" to the notes of the bank of England.

Mr. Fox said, that he would not then move the clause, of which he gave notice the other night, respecting the issuing of money from the Bank for the uses of Government, in its foreign relations. He would not tie it down by any restrictive qualifications, leaving it to the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Pitt) to propose such qualifications as to him should appear necessary and proper. He then moved a clause, to the following effect: "That it shall not be lawful for the Bank to issue any cash by way of loan to Government, for any foreign power, pending the operation of the restriction now laid on the Bank by the late minute of Council."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he felt no objection to the principle of the clause; it was his wish, as it was his object, and the object of the united exertions of the House, and of the country, that the advances of the Bank should be reduced rather than increased, during its present state of embarrassment. But, should the clause now proposed, be admitted, without any qualification or exception, very material inconvenience might arise to the public service. It was not now the time to enter into any discussion of the probability of any new demands being made; but he must again repeat, that very serious mischief might ensue from government being suddenly deprived of this source of raising money on Exchequer bills. There should, therefore, be some exception introduced into the clause, conferring a power of issuing money to a limited amount, suppose 600,000*l.* and that only on the credit of the Exchequer bills already authorized by a vote of Parliament.

Mr. Fox could not bring himself to approve of the exception. The Bank had already been too forward in making advances on the credit of loans; but they would render a much greater service to the country by being more cautious and backward in making such advances; he hoped however they would be warned by what had recently passed.

Mr. *Sheridan* asked the Minister, whether the whole of the 500,000*l.* had been paid to the Emperor, or whether any part of it was to be included in this exception of Exchequer bills?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that no part of this 600,000*l.* was applicable to the payment of that sum to the Emperor. The Emperor had been paid the whole of that sum.

The clause with the exception was agreed to.

Mr. *Nicholls* moved for leave to bring up a clause for limiting

limiting the amount of the debts which the Bank might be allowed to contract during a continuance of the present bill. He said that, antecedent to the failure of the Bank there was a natural limitation to the issue of Bank bills, viz. that if more were issued than were wanted for the purposes of commercial intercourse the holders of the bills could carry them in and demand cash. The present bill would take away this natural restriction; it was therefore necessary to substitute some positive restriction. To what sum the Bank should be restricted, he did not himself mean to suggest. He had left the blank to be filled up by his Majesty's Chancellor of the Exchequer; and if the sum which might be suggested by him was not very much out of proportion, he would acquiesce in it. It must strike every one that, if the bill passed without such restriction, the Bank was converted into a mint, which might coin Bank bills to any amount. He said, his Majesty's Chancellor of the Exchequer had expressed his hopes, that the bill would be of short duration. It was not the decision of that House that it should terminate on the 24th of June, which could fix a period to the duration of the bill. When the bill was once passed, it must continue, until the Bank could meet the demands of its creditors with cash, and to enable them to meet the demands of their creditors, it was necessary to restrain them from increasing the amount of their debts. It had been said, that the Bank would make a moderate use of the unlimited power entrusted to them. The French government had at first made a moderate use of the power of issuing assignats; but their necessities soon compelled them to issue them with profusion.

He was answered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. *Nicholls* replied that it was true that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had consented to a limitation of the open and direct loans from the Bank to Government, but it was still possible that the Minister might obtain money from the Bank covertly and indirectly. The Minister might open a loan, and the Minister's friends might fill that loan, relying that through the Minister's influence, they should obtain money from the Bank, either on the discount of bills, or by a pledge of their script.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* saw an evident distinction between the issue of our Bank paper, and that of assignats. The assignats were issued as a mere engine of finance—the

reverse was the case here; for here the issue was restrained by the very last clause, during the continuance of the present bill. But he declined discussing this subject now, because he thought that that discussion would be more in season, after the Finance Committee had made their report.

Mr. *Thornton* said, it was impossible to sit and hear such insinuations. He asserted, that no Minister, nor any authority on earth, ever had or ever should controul the conduct of the Directors of the Bank in giving accommodation to individual merchants by the way of discount; the direct contrary was the fact. The Directors had ever maintained the utmost independence in this matter, and he was persuaded they would ever do so in regard to the limitation proposed by the clause, he argued that it would be wholly unnecessary, because the Directors were the best judges to what extent their issue of paper should be made, which must be regulated by prudence, inasmuch as they would have to discharge it in specie whenever the present restriction should be removed, which was but for a short time fixed.

Mr. *Nicholls* replied, that however the honourable Director might be hurt with the observation, it was known that the discounts at the Bank were a matter of favour; that the influence of the Minister with the Bank Directors was a fact which could not be denied; that the present was not exactly the time for enquiry into the conduct of the Bank Directors, but that he had no scruple to say, that at some future period their conduct ought to be enquired into; and that according to the present appearance, the influence which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had exercised over the Bank Directors, affected all the parties with criminality.

Mr. *Fox* observed in reply to Mr. *Thornton*, that however short the present operation of the bill might be, it must be co-extensive with the necessity; and therefore in case the necessity for restraining the payment in specie continued beyond the 24th of June the bill must be renewed. He reprobated the sort of language which the honourable gentleman had used, since after the late discredit of the Bank he could not conceive the Directors were the most proper persons to judge of the limitation. If the Bank had lent only on good securities, he did not see how the capital could be diminished, for the surplus of 3,800,000*l.* stated in the report would still remain, though the Bank were to discount bills to the amount of 20,000,000*l.* The Bank might not hitherto have dis-
counted

counted bills of individuals on the recommendation of government; but after what they had seen, men must shut their eyes wilfully if they did not know that the recommendation of government might have great weight, as in the new loan for instance, where he doubted whether the Bank would advance to individuals on scrip, until recommended by government. He was for a large limitation rather than a small one, but urged that some sort of limitation ought at all events to be made, because it would do good so far, that it would tend to restore the confidence and credit of the public.

Mr. *Ryder* maintained that the authority of an Order in Council, on which the whole of this measure was founded, was next in authority to that of an act of Parliament. This he said to shew the propriety of the Bank obeying it; for it was a very different thing from that of the opinion of any Minister whatever, however solemnly expressed. And this shewed there was no reason for apprehending that the dictates of a Minister should be binding upon the Directors of the Bank at any future period.

Mr. *Fox* explained.

Mr. *Manning* disapproved of gentlemen endeavouring to criminate the Bank Directors before the report of the Committee on the causes of the necessity were made, and recommended them to suspend their judgment as juries do till the criminality be proved. As some allusions had been made to the difference of assistance pretended to have been given by the Bank to Government in 1783, and at the present time, he undertook to state that the Bank had always acted so impartially, that the difference did not exceed 300,000*l.*; for the amount of assistance given by the Bank to Government in 1783 was 10,300,000*l.*—and in 1796 it was 10,600,000*l.* out of which the unclaimed dividends to the amount of 376,000*l.* were to be deducted. If the Bank narrowed its assistance in 1783, it was guided entirely by the state of its affairs, which were less affluent than now; though he had to remind the House, that in 1796 it had refused to take in the payments of the loan of 18,000,000*l.* He concluded by objecting to the clause, because he conceived the issue of paper should be left to the constitutional controul of the Bank proprietors, and to no other.

After a few words from Mr. *Fox*, tending to shew that the Directors of the Bank forgot themselves, when they compared their present situation with that in which they could answer all demands that were made upon them, and desire

an opportunity to discuss the business of 1783, in a manner distinct from the present. The clause offered by Mr. Nicholls was put, and negatived.

The House being resumed, the chairman reported progress, and the report was ordered to be received the next day.

Mr. *Sheridan* thought the Committee of Enquiry should have been ordered to estimate the amount of the expected expenses for the present year, and previous to giving notice of a motion which he might possibly bring forward respecting the subsidy of 500,000*l.* granted to the Emperor, part of which he thought had been paid since the late calamity. He wished to know whether further advances were intended to be made during the present pressure to complete that sum?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was not his intention to advance any more money to the Emperor, without making a specific proposition to Parliament.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the sooner this subject was decided the better. He therefore gave notice that on Friday he should have a motion to make on this subject. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, *March 28.*

Read the Bills upon the table. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *March 28.*

BANK INDEMNITY BILL.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, there was a clause which he proposed to be added to the Bank Bill, on which, as considerable difference of opinion might exist, he wished it to be brought up in as early a stage as possible. This clause was, to enable the Bank, under certain restrictions, to repay in cash such sums as should be deposited in cash during the continuance of the restriction. He therefore moved, that the further consideration of the report should be deferred till Thursday; not meaning, however, to interfere with the gentleman whose motion on the state of slaves in the West Indies stood for that day; but he thought the discussion would not clash with that business.

CORN BILL.

Mr. *Ryder* moved the order of the day for the second reading of the Bill for repealing the act made last session for prohibiting the exportation of corn.

Mr.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* expressed a wish that the Bill should not be proceeded in, as it would be extremely injurious to the brewers of the country, who had suffered severely during the late scarcity, from the high price of grain. He gave some other reasons for his opposition to the Bill, which the low tone of his voice prevented us from hearing.

Mr. *Ryder* said, that this Bill only went to repeal a temporary act, which had been made in time of great scarcity, to prevent the mischiefs attending a want of grain in the country. The passing of this Bill, therefore, would only leave the matter where it was before.

Mr. *Whitbread* followed Alderman *Combe* in opposing the Bill, and said, that he, as well as all the brewers in the country, were deeply interested in it. They had all suffered much by the high price of grain, and this restriction on exportation ought not, in justice, to be taken off for some time. He said the present abundance of grain in the market was to be attributed to the farmers on the sea coasts sending in their corn from fear of an invasion. He concluded by moving, that the Bill be read a second time that day month.

Mr. *Ryder*, in reply, said, that the honourable Gentleman's objections went only to barley. To get rid of the bill, therefore, collaterally, on that account, would be very improper; particularly as the culture and raising of oats through the kingdom would be considerably impeded, if a free vent was not allowed for the great superfluity of it which lay on hand.

Mr. *Whitbread* said, the consumers of oats also suffered very much by the high price of that article during the late scarcity; and as oats, though they had had a fall, were again grown dearer, it would be unjust to pass a law which would raise the price still higher. He added, that it was impossible that the short continuation of the restriction could affect the cultivation of a single acre.

Mr. *Yorke* was of opinion that the proposition of the honourable Gentleman (Mr. *Whitbread*) deserved attention; but conceived, that the Committee would afford room for such qualifications and exceptions as would answer his purpose.

The House divided on the question, when there appeared.

<i>Ayes, (For the second reading)</i>	59
<i>Noes, (Against it)</i>	24

Majority 35

Mr. *Sheridan* stated, that, as the discussion he proposed to bring forward on Friday would involve points contained in the report

report of the revenue Committee, he wished to postpone his motion till that report was brought up, which he hoped would be in a day or two. He therefore gave notice of his intention to defer it till the Tuesday following.

DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

Colonel *Wood* said, that in the present alarming situation of public affairs, and at a time when not only unanimity, but the assistance and exertion of every individual in the country was required to restore tranquillity and prosperity, he would neither agitate any question likely to encrease the embarrassments of Government, nor in the discussion of the subject allow any imprudent expression to escape him that could tend to the disadvantage of the country; that as every unnecessary alarm was disgraceful to a country, so it would be equally uncreditable for them to remain, at a time when difficulties pressed upon us from every quarter, in a stupid and torpid state of insecurity, without making use of such exertions as were necessary to extricate us from this situation; that no men in this country were more clamorous against Ministers for their supineness and want of energy than members of that House, most of them gentlemen who, during the present war, had supported Ministers; that however much the opinions of such gentlemen may have changed upon that subject, his still continued the same; that he imputed the late alarm not to any apprehensions which the people of this country had of any threatened invasion, but to the want of confidence in Ministers, occasioned by the late inattention to the security of Ireland, which country had been saved from a calamity, the extent of which no man could calculate, by the interposition of Providence only; that the public had an undoubted right to know not only that Ministers were themselves vigilant and attentive, but that they had consulted those many able and experienced officers, to whose advice upon such an occasion the country naturally looked, and had formed some regular plan and system, in place of resorting to little temporary expedients, of which there were very great doubts at present; that in this instance, at least, he hoped they would take a lesson from our enemies, the chief success of whose military operations during the present war is justly ascribed to a military council, at the head of which is Carnot, composed of men of the first abilities in that country. He asked what proofs the public had received, since the late alarm, of the additional vigilance of Ministers? On a former occasion, when he noticed the deficiency of arms, the justly high character of the noble Marquis at the head of the ordnance

nance department he thought rendered it impossible for any man not to be satisfied that every exertion of that noble Marquis would, in every situation in which he may be placed, be made for the honour and advantage of the country. What he mentioned in no respect could be applied to him, nor yet to any officer in that department. If arms he wanted, not only ready money ought to be paid, but every possible encouragement held out to the manufacturers. Depots of arms and of stores ought, long ago, to have been established in different parts of the country. The expediency of a large army for the protection of the capital, the rivers Thames and Medway, without depending upon the junction of distant corps, must, no doubt, have occurred to his Majesty's Ministers. The necessity of blocking up the enemy's ports, not only to intercept their supplies and communications, but to impede their operations, no doubt the First Lord of the Admiralty will attend to, of whose zeal to serve his country no person thought more highly than himself. The security of the peace and good order of this great city, whenever it may be found necessary to march the military towards the coasts, ought to be timely provided for, and not delayed till such time as the press of the necessity might render it impracticable. A military army of all men capable of bearing arms, particularly towards the coasts, for a few hours every week, has suggested itself to many gentlemen, as the least expensive and most efficacious mode of securing the country, and not attended with either the expence or inconvenience of assembling the militia from distant and remote counties. The retrenchment of expences, at the same time that the security of the country can be provided for, are both of them essentially necessary for its prosperity. Many different opinions had been offered relative to the cause of the late shock to public credit, assigning various speculative reasons, but he was surprised gentlemen should in general so absurdly overlook the only immediate and great cause, which so soon as it can be removed upon solid and wise principles, gold and silver will naturally return and flow into their usual channels. The sole and immediate cause was the late extraordinary alarm, which induced every timid and speculative person to draw their money from their bankers, for the purpose of hoarding or securing it themselves; and if we reflect for a moment on the effect which this was likely to have amongst so many millions of people, we cannot be surprised that gold and silver has so suddenly disappeared. It therefore became more necessary that the public should be convinced that the defence of the country is properly attended to; as, till that is the case, the same difficulties will

not only continue, but every attempt to remedy it by any other means prove ineffectual; that it was not only necessary to attend to the security of our own country, but at the same time adopt vigorous measures for distressing the enemy, which our numerous fleets and able and gallant officers gave us many opportunities of doing, and of occupying their attention at home. That he had first thought of a Secret Committee of the House, for the purpose of making the enquiry which he meant to propose, but upon more maturely considering the subject, and after consulting precedents where they were to be found at all applicable, he was satisfied that a board composed of the most able and experienced naval and military officers, would not only be best calculated to conduct such enquiry, but the result thereof be the most satisfactory to the public. That about twelve years ago, when the defence of the coasts and the protection of the dock-yards of Portsmouth and Plymouth came under consideration, it was then proposed that a board of officers, similar to what he had mentioned, should be established, and was then cordially acceded to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose concurrence on the present occasion he hoped would not be withheld, as he was certain no just or solid argument could be supported, why the country, upon a subject which so materially interests them, should not have every possible satisfaction. That in the year 1785 it was stated, and was not controverted, that in the most glorious times of England such a measure had often been resorted to. That during the time of Elizabeth, when threatened by the famous armada, a Princess served by the ablest statesmen and soldiers of Europe, yet on such an emergency, wishing to avail herself of the united wisdom of her kingdom, she assembled a council of her best officers, and desired them to form a plan for the occasion. That on the present, he thought we could not follow a better example. That, therefore, he should move,

“ That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, beseeching him to direct his Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, the Master General of the Ordnance, in conjunction with other able and experienced naval and military officers, on whose judgment and abilities his Majesty most relied, to take into their consideration the present state of the defence of the country, and to consult and determine upon any other measures of security which may appear eligible to adopt in the present situation of public affairs.”

Sir John Sinclair seconded the motion.

Mr. Secretary Dundas remarked, that those who had advised the colonel against making any motion for a secret committee, had

had given him very good advice ; for either the result of their enquiries might be dangerous to be disclosed, or, if it were wished only that there should be communicated to the Committee as much information as might be perfectly safe, the effect of their deliberations would be nugatory. The honourable Gentleman did not desire it to be disclosed where the force of the country was distributed? he did not wish the First Lord of the Admiralty to mention the destination and station of the fleets? he did not mean that it should be told where depots for arms were established? If he had wished that such information should be laid before the Committee, if he had desired that a full disclosure should be made to them of every circumstance connected with the subject, it would be laying before the enemy intelligence of all that had been undertaken, and all that was meant to be undertaken. The honourable Gentleman mentioned an Address to his Majesty. Better grounds, however, he thought ought to be given before such a motion could be acceded to. The House had furnished the Executive Government with great powers. It was the duty of Government, therefore, to adopt the necessary measures. What was it, however, that the honourable Colonel wished? He had not specified any blame against the Duke of York, upon whose conduct, indeed, no difference of opinion could be entertained. What did the Gentleman then suppose? Did he suppose that his Royal Highness, having had the distribution of the army entrusted to him, had not had recourse to the advice of able and experienced officers? Was not Sir William Howe employed in one district, Sir Charles Grey in another, and General Musgrave in a third? Was it not notorious that there was not one officer of experience who was not confidentially employed? Were not Kent and Suffex under the command of Sir Charles Grey, and Essex under Sir William Howe? The honourable Gentleman, therefore, conveyed a reflection upon the Duke of York, which was perfectly unfounded.

Colonel *Wood* denied that he had mentioned the name of the Duke of York, or alluded to it. He was as much satisfied with the conduct of his Royal Highness as Ministers could be. He had adverted to the unprotected state of Ireland.

Mr. *Dundas* said, if that was the honourable Gentleman's idea, it would be as profitable to move for a board of all the officers in Ireland. But the honourable Gentleman had censured the Commander in Chief in effect, if not in words; for if he asserted that there was no concert, no understanding, no consultation, between the Commander in Chief and the officers

employed, this was a neglect of duty, and implied censure. As the motion went to imply such want of concert, and as he conceived it unnecessary, he should move "that the House do now adjourn."

Mr. Fox said, that a great part of the Secretary of State's speech related to a Secret Committee, which was not now before the House. For his own part, he should have preferred a Secret Committee, but nevertheless he should vote for the present motion. At a time in which there was much ground for distrust, nothing would so much tend to satisfy the people, as to prove to them that all measures had been taken for the defence and security of the country. With respect to a Secret Committee, he could not conceive but that such a one might be selected from the House, equally as fit, as many of those whom Ministers were forced to trust. Such a Committee might state, that every thing had been done which ought to be done; that would be satisfactory to the people. If they found any defect on the part of administration, it would be for them to determine whether the evil of disclosing it would not be counterbalanced by the remedy which might then be applied to it.

With respect to the Duke of York, he really believed that there never existed any man who gave up his whole time, and applied his whole mind, more to the duties of his station than he did; but this was not a time to give up any thing that was necessary for the safety of the country, out of compliment to any person. Mr. Dundas had alluded to Ireland. Was not the unprotected state of Ireland a strong ground for distrust? The House now knew that Ireland was not in such a state as it ought to have been, at the time of the attempt made by the French. He alluded to the state of Cork. But what was the situation of the commander in chief? He had the command of the British army—he had nothing to do with Ireland—he was not a Cabinet Minister—he was not in possession of the same sources of intelligence as Ministers—he knew not the extent of their plans. There were, he was sure, many cases which could be put, in which the Ministers might be proved to have neglected their duty, and the commander in chief not to have neglected his duty in the slightest degree. But the honourable gentleman who had made the motion, wished to take a comprehensive view of the subject, to combine in it the military and naval administration. Would the Secretary of State say, that upon the subject of the naval defence of the country, the first Lord of the Admiralty

ministry had had recourse to the advice of naval officers of experience, in the same manner as the Duke of York had had recourse to the advice of military officers. After what the House had seen, even from the papers that had been laid before them, confessedly for the purpose of exculpating a particular person; after all the alarms that had been felt, could gentlemen say, that the conduct of those who directed naval affairs, afforded sufficient ground for supposing, that they adopted such measures as were best adapted for the safety of the country. He therefore opposed the motion of adjournment.

Col. *Pierrepont* said, he would give his decided negative to the motion, and vote for the adjournment.—If there was any thing in which Ministers must be confessed to have acted unexceptionably, it was in the measures taken for the defence of the country.

Mr. *Courtenay* rose to set right a mistake of the honourable mover, respecting the ordnance. He could state, from good authority, that 100,000 stand of arms were ordered to be in the Tower; and the noble Marquis, late at the head of that department, had been diligent that there should be no deficiency. If there was any, it was not his fault, nor did the fault rest with the ordnance. The hon. gentleman opposite had done ample justice to the merit of the officers to whose care the defence of the kingdom was committed; we might make ourselves perfectly safe under their protection. Indeed, if more advice should be wanted, more could be had, since we could boast more generals and field-marsbals than the rest of Europe put together. We might be led to suppose, from circumstances, that young generals and old women were best fitted for love and war. With respect to Ireland, the Marquis Townshend had caused a topographical military survey of every part of that kingdom, where an enemy could land, to be delineated. General Frazer, whose abilities were universally acknowledged, was employed, with other able men. He presumed not to speak of the work with his own judgment; but he understood from military men it was a most complete thing, and it was now in the possession of the Duke of York. Under these circumstances, he thought the kingdom perfectly safe, and hoped his honourable friend would withdraw his motion. If more assistance was wanted, he trusted more could be found. There was his hon. friend near him (Gen. Tarleton), and Lord Moira, whose

whose march to join the Duke of York was admired as a *chef d'œuvre* of generalship.

Col. *Gascoigne* asked why the hon. gentleman had not stated any deficiency, if he knew of any? but he had done no such thing, except in the case of Ireland; and he presumed the House could do nothing in that case, the country being under its own legislature.

Mr. *Sargent* vindicated the activity and attention of the Board of Ordnance, in taking those measures which were best adapted to insure the internal defence of the country.

Colonel *Fullarton* said, without assenting to the proposition of the Secretary of State, that every good officer in the army is consulted and employed; without combating ideas any one may entertain, respecting the terms or object of the present motion, or respecting the most eligible mode of ascertaining the defensive arrangements of the country; it is, undoubtedly, desirable, that this discussion should be brought before the House in some form or other; because it affords an opportunity to his Majesty's Ministers of explaining to the public at large the actual state of preparation, and of national defence.

It is by no means sufficient that his Majesty's Ministers are preparing the country for defence; it is essential, on the present emergency, that they give to the public mind a sensation of security, and an impression that they are to be defended—Unfortunately the impression of late has been directly the reverse.

In various parts of these kingdoms, the people conceive that they are not sufficiently protected. To this impression is owing much of the calamity which has befallen the Bank of England, much of the embarrassment which has distressed the country Banks: for the people in the country are convinced that the French will make good their landing, and that there is not a competent force nor preparation to repel them. Under this impression, the people conceive, that, in the event of an invasion taking place, it is more eligible to have guineas in their pockets than Bank notes.—Until this apprehension is removed—until the public mind is completely at rest, on the business of invasion, preparation, and defence, it is in vain to think of restoring public confidence, or public credit.

There is another point, which tends much to the depression of the public mind—that is, the inefficacy of our naval force

force to protect these kingdoms from insult and invasion. It is admitted by many, and was powerfully stated by the right hon. Secretary for the War Department, that the conduct of our Admiralty is unexceptionable; that the condition of our squadrons is complete; and that the efficiency of our Admirals is beyond the reach of censure. Notwithstanding this triumphant statement, it is nevertheless true, that the whole naval force of England is inadequate to prevent the French from passing their holidays in Great Britain or Ireland, without invitation, and from going away again, without taking leave.

This being the fact, it undoubtedly becomes the duty of every good subject to use his utmost exertions, in order that every district and county in these kingdoms may be put on such a footing of internal defence, as shall enable them to give the French a proper reception on shore, as often as they fail to be properly saluted by our squadrons at sea.

Fortunately there is a spirit of zeal and energy in the provinces and counties of these kingdoms, which require nothing but corresponding sentiments of energy in the capital, to baffle all the efforts of our enemies, and to place this country beyond the reach of insult or invasion.

To prove this, he begged leave to read the resolutions of the county of Ayr, on the subject of defence. Similar resolutions had been brought forward in every county of the north.

[The Colonel read the resolutions of the county of Ayr, signed by *Eglintoun*, Preses.]

He next begged permission to call the attention of the House to the extraordinary contrast between the zeal and energy manifested in these resolutions, and the apathy and in-exertion which prevail in this capital. He said he was sensible, that by persisting in such sentiments, he exposed himself to a repetition of animadversion from an hon. gentleman (Mr. Sheridan), whose animadversions are no sinecure---It was reserved for the ingenuity of that hon. gentleman to discover, that allusions in point to the history of other countries, afforded proof that one is ignorant and unacquainted with the actual condition of our own. On the principle he supposed, stated by Figaro, the Spanish barber, who was turned out of an office under government, because a love of letters, and of history, including poetry also, is incompatible with a turn for business and the spirit of affairs---The hon. gentleman had still more ingeniously discovered, that because he had presumed to state, that there were members in that House
more

more prone to speak well than act right. he thereby proved himself guilty of disrespect and inattention to public credit, to Mr. Abraham Newland, and the Bank of England. He was ready to refer the question at issue respecting public credit and national preparation, to the decision of the said Mr. A. Newland; and although neither he (Col. F.) nor the hon. gentleman were exactly what are called *good men* upon change, yet he was confident that Mr. Newland and any jury of good men upon change, would find a verdict with him-- that it is not by elocution, public credit is to be restored, not by harangues on the circulating medium and representative sign, which seem at present to evade the grasp of orators and statesmen, but by wise and liberal conduct on the part of the banking and monied interest, aided by such measures of preparation and precaution, on the part of government, as shall effectually secure these kingdoms from apprehensions of invasion and commotion.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, this was the second time that the hon. gentleman who spoke last, had done him the honour to allude personally to him. The honourable gentleman had rebuked the House for their sloth and inactivity; was that a proof that the restoration of the credit of the country would prove its best defence? If ever there was any man who was qualified to distinguish between a debt procrastinated, and a debt absolutely refused to be paid, it was the honourable gentleman. He could not have forgotten the objections which were at one time made to the payment of a demand which he had upon the Treasury for about 15,000l.; and the facility with which he afterwards recovered the sum, when he was no longer an admirer of the new order of things. With respect to the question, he maintained that it was not at all inconsistent for the means of defence to be insufficient, at the same time that the conduct of the commander in chief was perfectly proper and justifiable. It did not follow that Ministers made every necessary communication to the commander in chief; and he elucidated this observation, by referring to what would have been done in Ireland previous to the invasion, upon a motion similar to this. Some gentlemen would have got up and stated it to be a libel on the commander in chief, the House would of course have agreed to that observation, and yet when the experiment was made, it was proved that Ireland was in a most scandalous state of defence, and that if the French had actually landed, they must have taken Cork. It was a fortunate event for Ireland as well as for this country, they did not land, even without Monsieur Hoche, or
Monster

Monſter Hoche as they called him. They had been very near coming to a right anchorage, and if they had, they might have landed and proceeded to Cork immediately. After ſeveral other remarks of a ſimilar tendency, he concluded by giving his aſſent to the motion.

The *Secretary at War* ſaid, he ſhould ſay but few words to the queſtion. It ſeemed to him this motion was not ſo much to prepare a general defence, as to put the Executive Government into a new commiſſion; and the queſtion would be then, whether it was in better hands? If they were to come to that reſolution, the right motion would be to ſay, that the Executive Government was no longer uſeful. No general body, who had not all the information of every department before them, were able to judge of the neceſſity, and of the proper remedies. This the Executive Government had, and the nation were to take it out of thoſe hands where the conſtitution had placed it.

The honourable Gentleman ſaid none could deny the ſituation of Ireland; he would not deny it upon a principle upon which the honourable gentleman ought not to affirm, namely, that he was not acquainted ſufficiently with the ſubject, as it was a matter confiſed to the Iriſh Government. The queſtion of the ſufficiency of the ſtate of defence muſt be decided at leaſt by perſons whoſe habits and information made them competent judges; and the honourable gentleman had ſhewn no reaſon to ſuppoſe that they were not now as well ſelected as they would be by a Committee of that Houſe. In fact, the motion went to do that only which was already done.

General *Tarleton* ſaid, he did not come prepared to ſpeak, but he thought it neceſſary to trouble the Houſe with a few words. He ſtated that there was now a report current, that the enemy really intended to make an experiment on ſome part of the kingdom. They had laid an embargo on their ports, and therefore he thought it improper that any thing ſhould be revealed, which might be injurious to us, for the enemy to be acquainted with. He ſaid, that the country had loſt all confidence in the preſent Miniſters was apparent, indeed the nation had very ſubſtantial reaſons for viewing the events of the war with indignation and diſguſt. Would the honourable Gentleman produce the fair ſtatements of the proceedings relative to Dunkirk, and of the occurrences at Toulon? Would he produce the death-scroll at St. Domingo, or the particulars of the maſſacre at Quiberon? He

asserted that Ministers who had been in possession of the resources of a mighty people, had squandered them away, and with them our military reputation. He contrasted the present times with those of the duke of Marlborough, and observed, that whatever might be the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers, he should never, for his own part, forget that he was an officer and an Englishman, and he trusted that the troops in this country, which he knew to be numerous and well disciplined, would be properly stationed.

General *Egerton* said a few words in favour of the motion of adjournment.

Colonel *Wood* observed that the only motive which he had for troubling the House with a motion upon the subject, which certainly was the most important of any that could possibly be agitated in that House, was solely with a view of doing away those alarms which had so universally pervaded the country, and thereby to have restored public credit to its usual vigour.

The only grounds of objection that had been offered by the right honourable Secretary were founded upon the duke of York and the army, whose name, he declared, had never been mentioned by him, but in terms of the highest respect, and thereby the right honourable gentleman had endeavoured to defend the neglect of himself and colleagues by implicating the character of his Royal Highness, of whose merits, no man in that House, not even the honourable gentleman himself, had a higher opinion than what he entertained.

That the selection of officers which his royal highness had made for the commands of the different stations, must do infinite honour to his judgment, for no man could hear of the names of Sir William Howe, Sir Charles Grey, Sir William Meadows, General Musgrave and other able officers to whom the command of stations had been entrusted, but in terms of the highest approbation. The Colonel observed that one right honourable gentleman had stated his Royal Highness the commander in chief, to have the sole charge and responsibility of the defence of the country; whereas the Secretary at War had afterwards contradicted this assertion, and declared that as his Royal Highness the Duke of York was not a member of the cabinet, the Executive Government, that is, Ministers, were alone competent to judge of the proper measures. In short there was such a contradiction betwixt the statements of the two right honourable Secretaries, that the public, he foresaw, would be left as much
in

in the dark as ever, with whom the responsibility for the security of the country rested.

The Colonel observed, that having faithfully discharged what he had conceived to be his duty, he would not press the House to a division; but he begged that it might be understood that it was the farthest from his intention to throw the smallest reflection either upon the commander in chief, or any officers of the army, of whom he declared no man thought more highly than himself.

The question was then put, and the motion for the adjournment carried.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *March 29.*

Read the bills upon the table and adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *March 29.*

Mr. Alderman *Anderson* brought up a bill for better regulating the mode of taking the returns of the prices of corn and flour at the London market, by which the price of bread is to be affixed.

The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time, and to be printed.

Mr. *Long* brought up an account of advances made to the Emperor since the 13th of December 1796, &c. as moved for by Mr. Grey on Friday the 24th instant.

Deferred the other orders of the day.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, *March 30.*

BREACH OF PRIVILEGE

The Earl of *Oxford* desired the attention of their Lordships to a circumstance which had recently taken place and which while it affected him personally, involved in it a high breach of the privileges of that House. In consequence of his motion to address his Majesty, with a view to a negotiation for peace, being negatived, he had come down to the clerk's room the next day to enter a protest upon the books, stating his reasons for dissenting from the decision of the House, but to his extreme surprise he found his motion was

not entered, the noble and learned Lord then upon the wool-sack (Lord Kenyon) having carried off the motion in his pocket, he therefore moved,

"That a Chancellor taking away the motion of a peer for an Address, so that the same cannot be immediately entered on the Journals, is guilty of a high breach of the privileges of this House, and that Lord Kenyon, acting as Pro-Chancellor, is guilty of a high breach of the privileges of this House, in having taken away the motion of the Earl of Oxford on the 23d instant, and that he be censured for the same."

The Bishop of *Rochester* rose as soon as Lord Kenyon had read the motion, and moved that the standing order No. 77, be read.

It was read accordingly. The purport of it was, "that any person printing or publishing the proceedings of that House, or any part thereof, without the authority of the same, shall be deemed guilty of a high breach of privilege."

The Bishop then rose again, and said he was astonished that a noble Lord in the second year of his sitting as a peer, should undertake to teach that House its duty. When he learnt from rumour that the noble Lord intended to make a motion complaining of a breach of privilege, he had conceived it to have been a breach of privilege committed in a most audacious manner, by a miserable newspaper. He held in his hand a newspaper entitled *the Oracle or Public Advertiser* of the instant, which contained a gross libel against their Lordships, conveyed in a pretended account of their proceedings on a late occasion, under the head of an *Address to the Nation*,* in which Lord Grenville's reply to the motion
of

* ADDRESS TO THE NATION.

PORTMAN-SQUARE, MARCH 27, 1797.

IT was my intention to have entered my protest on the Journals of the House of Lords the day after I moved my Address to his Majesty for peace, and for that purpose I went to the clerk's office, and to my utter surprise I found that my Address had never been entered upon the Journals. Upon enquiry I was informed that Lord Kenyon had taken it home with him. I wish at all events that the public should be in possession of my protest, and I hereby pledge myself to my country and to the House of Lords, that I will this day, in my place, in that House, demand the fullest reparation for this insult, offered through one to the whole House, in this illegal and unprecedented manner.

PROTEST.

Dissentient, First, Because seeing no means of salvation for this country but by an immediate, sincere and lasting peace, I think the Address, which I moved, March 23, 1797, calculated to produce that happy event, and that a refusal to carry that Address to the throne, tends to a continuation of this cruel war, which I hold to be certain and inevitable ruin.

Secondly,

of the noble Earl, whose title of OXFORD AND MORTIMER was subscribed to the Protest, as it was called, that was subjoined to the Introduction, was to consist of arguments that were insolently *poor, weak, and rude, and such as were never heard of before.*

He was aware, his Lordship said, that the custom of the newspapers to publish what they gave as accounts of the debates of the House, was, in some sort, connived at; and that, although it was known to be in direct defiance of the standing order, it was to be, to a certain degree, excused, from the frequency of the practice; but when so audacious a misrepresentation of the proceedings was published, he had expected that the noble Lord would have done what he should have felt

Secondly, Because a Secretary of State's moving, that an Address to his Majesty on the 30th of December, 1796, should be read, is a poor, weak, and rude manner (to say no worse of it) of answering the arguments advanced in my Address.

Thirdly, Because I believe that the arguments advanced by me have never before been touched upon, even in debates, and no attempts having been made to answer those arguments, the conclusion which the public must draw from it is, that they are perfectly unanswerable.

Fourthly, Because it was my sincere wish that the eyes of his Majesty should be opened to the dangers with which he is surrounded, and that giving peace to his exhausted subjects, and restoring to them their rights, should be his own gracious act.

Fifthly, Because I have the highest authority for every sentiment respecting the "economy and reform of abuses" which I recommended, namely, His Majesty's own words, in that most excellent and patriotic speech made at the close of the American war, and which I quoted in my reply.

Sixthly, Because whenever a nation is in the situation we are in at present, it requires the united energy and public spirit of the whole nation to re-establish its credit, and I am persuaded that energy and public spirit are only to be obtained by the public possessing their ancient free Constitution, which they so justly revere; and I maintain that according to common law, which is common sense, and according to "the TRUE spirit of the Constitution," which is founded in wisdom, liberty, and justice, the people of Great Britain have a right, and ought, to be fairly and equally represented in THAT which, by its very name, is THEIR House of Parliament.

Seventhly, Because I hold the Borough system, and every other system of corruption that has of late years crept into practice, to be directly contrary to the true spirit of the Constitution, and big with the most alarming evils to King and People; and that to confer the honour of Peerage on men who have no other merit than that of commanding boroughs, and performing ministerial jobs, degrades that high dignity, and takes away one of the greatest motives that actuates the human mind, the hope of reward, by making it unworthy the acceptance of those men for whom it was intended; men who have rendered great and distinguished services to their country by their valour, their talents, or their learning.

Eighthly, Because I am desirous of making this public avowal of my principles, which nothing on earth shall make me alter, and which I have learnt from the acts and writings of our ancestors, who loved liberty, and understood it.

Ninthly, Because I am resolved, whenever I see danger, BOLDLY and INDEPENDENTLY, to the full extent of my ability, to discharge my duty to my King and country.

OXFORD AND MORTIMER,

it

it his duty to do, in vindication of his own honour and dignity, and the honour and dignity of the House, complained against the printer of the paper in question, for having published so aggravated and audacious a libel, and thereby been guilty of a high breach of privilege. The arguments contained in the flimsy production called a Protest, and signed Oxford and Mortimer, were not worth an answer. But there was one expression in it which he could not help taking notice of. His Lordship read the following section of the Protest:

Sixthly. Because, whenever a nation is in the situation we are in at present, it requires the united energy and public spirit of the whole nation to re-establish its credit; and I am persuaded that energy and public spirit are only to be obtained by the public possessing their ancient free Constitution, which they so justly revere; and I maintain that, according to common law, which is common sense, and according to "the TRUE spirit of the Constitution," which is founded in wisdom, liberty, and justice, the people of Great Britain have a right and ought to be fairly and equally represented in THAT which, by its very name, is THEIR House of Parliament.

In the last words of this section, the Bishop observed, it described the House of Commons as *the Parliament of the People*, which he must contend was neither legal nor constitutional language. The Parliament was *the King's Parliament*, and so the laws of the land and the Constitution defined it. He mentioned this, in particular, because it shewed that when rash and inexperienced young men adopted strong expressions, they were apt to mislead themselves, and to confound the true character of what they took upon them to describe. The Bishop concluded with repeating, that it was against the printer that the noble Earl should have come down to complain of a high breach of privilege, and not to have brought forward, what, if he were not restrained by the respect he entertained personally towards the noble Earl, and for the House in general, he should have called a petulant motion, grounded on, perhaps, the casual negligence of one of the first and most respectable characters in the kingdom.

Lord *Kenyon* and the Earl of *Oxford* rose together, and there was a divided call for each of them, but the majority calling upon Lord *Oxford*, or *the question*,

His Lordship said, he would rather have heard the whole of what the noble and learned Lord had to offer before he said any more; but, certainly, if their Lordships chose it, they might insist on the question. In answer to what they had just heard, he should only say, that the whole of the right reverend Prelate's speech had no reference whatever to the subject then before the House.

The Marquis *Townshend* remarked, that what had been said by the noble Earl near him, as well as the observations of the
right

right reverend Prelate relative to the misrepresentations of the newspapers, were undoubtedly true. He could not, however, subscribe to the doctrine of the right reverend Prelate, that the Parliament was *the King's Parliament*. He had the honour of deriving his seat in that House from a long line of ancestors, and he had been bred up in the principle of believing and considering the Parliament as the Parliament of the Nation, of which the Crown was one estate. The House of Commons, undoubtedly, being the representative of the people, might fairly be considered as their House of Parliament. With regard to the newspaper misrepresentations, though no man was a stronger advocate for the liberty of the press, or a more sincere friend to it, than he was, there were occasions on which the newspapers made no scruple to convey the most scandalous and bare-faced falsehoods. That very day he had seen an article published in one of them, asserted to be the answer of his Majesty to a noble Earl near him (Lord Suffolk), on his having had an audience of his Sovereign; when the fact was, his Majesty had not returned any answer. This, to say the least of it, was a very indecent exercise of the freedom of the press, and such instances of abuse would well justify the learned Prelate's complaining of it on the present occasion; and, indeed, he imagined that the right reverend Prelate would have ended with a motion of that sort.

The Earl of *Suffolk* rose, merely to confirm what the noble Marquis had said, and to declare that no answer had been given by his Majesty.

The Bishop of *Rocheſter*, in explanation, said, that certainly the House of Commons, separately considered, being the representative of the people, might be termed their House of Parliament; but speaking of the Parliament collectively, it was the King's Parliament, and so defined by the law of the land and the Constitution. The King alone could convene, prorogue, and dissolve it; and therefore, in strict, legal, and constitutional language, it could only be recognized and described as the King's Parliament. With regard to what the noble Marquis had said, of his having expected that he would have ended his speech with a complaint of a breach of privilege against the printer of the Oracle; his not doing so was to be ascribed, first, to his considering that such a motion would come more properly from the noble Earl whose name was used in the paper; and, next, to his not being aware who might be implicated in it, nor how high it would reach.

Lord *Kenyon* once more offered to come forward, but the call for "the question" was so general, that he returned to
the

584 WOODFALL'S PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS. [COMMONS,
the woolfack, and put it; after which his Lordship declared
the *Not Contents* had it; but the Earl of Oxford saying the
Contents had it, the House divided.

<i>Contents</i>	—	1
<i>Not Contents</i>	—	50
		—
<i>Majority</i>		49

A resolution was moved and agreed to, that no entry of the
proceeding be made in the journals.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *March 30.*

Mr. *Edwards* reported from the Inverkeithing Committee,
that they had determined that Sir A. Cochrane Johnston was
duly elected, and that the Petition of Sir John Henderson,
complaining of an undue election, was not frivolous or vex-
atious.

Mr. *Fox* moved, and the House agreed, to postpone the ap-
pointment of a Committee to try the merits of the Kent elec-
tion to the 25th of April next.

Mr. *Pollen* said, he wished most sincerely not to embarrass
Ministers, but to gain the co-operation of his Majesty's sub-
jects, to call on them to renew a negociation for peace, or to
proceed with spirit and energy in the war, if war should be un-
avoidable. He therefore gave notice, that on Friday next he
should have the honour to make a motion to address his Ma-
jesty to renew a negociation for peace, or for declaring expli-
cantly the reason for continuing the war.

Mr. *Elliot* postponed his motion on the Slave Trade to
Thursday next.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, *March 31.*

The bills upon the table having gone through their several
stages, their Lordships, without doing any further business,
adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, *March 31.*

A new writ was ordered for the borough of Inverkeithing,
&c. in the room of Andrew Cochrane Johnston, Esq. who
has accepted an office under Government.

The

The House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House upon the Bill to permit the exportation of grain.

Mr. *Ryder* proposed that the commencement of the Bill should be on the 30th of April.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* proposed the 30th of May, which was supported by Mr. *Whitbread* and Mr. Alderman *Combe*, on account of the loss that must be sustained by many merchants, whose orders for foreign corn, given a considerable time back, could not be executed within 30 days from the present time. They wished the limitation might extend to the 30th of May. But after a conversation, in which several members took a part, the clause was carried without a division.

Mr. *Ryder* proposed that the word "Barley" should be left out.

Mr. *Coke* was against the exception. He said, it had been the intention of the county of Norfolk to petition the House that the exportation of grain in general should be permitted, but, in consequence of this Bill, he had informed them that such a step would be unnecessary. Unless the exportation of barley was likely to be permitted, that county, which grew more barley than all the rest of the kingdom put together, would suffer very great inconvenience. At present, in the county of Norfolk, the best barley was at the very low price of fourteen shillings, and even twelve shillings, a quarter; and if the exportation was not permitted it would be impossible for gentlemen to obtain their rents.

Mr. *Whitbread* reminded his honourable friend that they were legislating not for the county of Norfolk, but for the country at large. Farmers had for some time past an opportunity of making very great profits, and the prices till lately had been high. The reason why barley was so low in the county of Norfolk probably was, that the barley of last year's growth in the county of Norfolk had been of an inferior quality. For some time past it was notorious that persons, connected with brewing, had carried on their business under great loss; and, as the prices had fallen but very lately, he contended that the exception of barley ought to be made.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* spoke on the same side.

The Committee divided:

<i>Ayes</i>	—	54
<i>Noes</i>	—	43
<i>Majority</i>		11

The House was then resumed, and the report ordered to be received on Monday.

ADVANCES TO THE EMPEROR.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that as he had put off the motion he had intended to make that day with regard to any farther advances to the Emperor, in order that the House might be in possession of the report of the Secret Committee, he was desirous to know when that report would be produced. That it was in contemplation to make farther advances to the Emperor was evident, from a return of the sums advanced by the Bank since the sixteenth of December, 1796. To this return he requested the particular attention of the House. For some part of the advances which had been made, the security was of a very extraordinary kind. It was stated to be the receipts of persons by whom it had been received, and the obligation of the Imperial ambassador at this Court, that the advances should be paid out of any loan which might be negociated for the Emperor in this country. This was the most extraordinary security he had ever heard of. It was the same as if a man said to another, "if you will lend me twenty guineas, I will pay you ten that I owe you." He hoped that the right honourable Gentleman would not endeavour to avoid the discussion of this subject by any side-wind, but that he would answer, candidly and explicitly, whether he intended making any farther advances to the Emperor? If there was not a prospect of the report of the Secret Committee being before the House in a day or two, he certainly should not defer his motion upon this subject, and in this view he moved,

"That there be laid before the House copies of the representations made by the Directors of the Bank with regard to advances to the Emperor, since the first of January, 1795, with the answer of his Majesty's Ministers thereto."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that it was impossible for him to answer the question, when the report of the Secret Committee would be laid before the House. He assured the honourable Gentleman that he did not wish to avoid the discussion of the subject, nor was it possible for him to avoid it; but still he was desirous to meet it fairly and fully. In answer to the other question of the honourable Gentleman, he would state, that, in all the circumstances of the case, to make farther advances to the Emperor, provided we could so obtain his cordial co-operation in the common cause, was a measure the most essential to the interests of the country. Whether it was proper, however, to enter upon the subject, upon partial information, he would leave to the House to determine.

Mr.

Mr. *Fox* said, that it would be desirable to have farther information, if there was a probability of obtaining that information in time for the motion of his honourable friend. His own opinion was, that unless the pecuniary situation of the country was far different from what he conceived it to be, no advantage the co-operation of the Emperor could produce would compensate the certain ruin with which, in the present situation of the country, the farther export of specie would be attended. In the view of the subject being discussed on Tuesday, he could see no objection to producing the papers moved for, as they would be of importance to shew what the opinion of the Bank Directors had been with regard to the export of money to the Emperor.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he did not oppose the production of the papers.

Mr. *Grey* thought, that as this subject was in some measure connected with the investigation of the Secret Committee, it might be as well to wait for the report. The Committee had not been idle, but the subject of their enquires had been very comprehensive. The examination with regard to the points alluded to, he imagined, would be concluded the next day, and he hoped that early next week the Committee would be able to present a report.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that the right honourable gentleman had answered his question with great candour and fairness. He was unwilling to defer a motion which he conceived to be of so much importance to determine as soon as possible. If the right hon. gentleman meant to defend the propriety of sending more money to the Emperor, without waiting for the statement of the report, he did not think it would be necessary to put it off.

Mr. *Grey* said, that there were inconveniencies every way, as it would be necessary to wait till the report, which must be voluminous, was printed, and allow time for the House to consider it.

Mr. *Curwen* wished the motion to be brought on without delay, as if put off till the report was received, it would scarcely take place before Easter.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* warned Mr. *Sheridan*, that the principles of the debate, when the motion did come on, were not to be fixed from what passed now. It would be an additional objection to the proposal of refusing any farther supplies to the Emperor, that it was without information,

tion, though he might agree to the question on general grounds.

The motion was then carried.

POOR BILL.

Mr. *Whitbread* wished to know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer meant to revive the order for the Poor bill, or whether it was meant to be dropped. If it was not to be revived, he meant to move for leave to bring in a bill to regulate one of the points to which the bill went?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that he intended to revive the bill, but amidst the business to which the attention of the House had been called, he did not think it was advisable to push it forward, nor had he been able to apply to it his own attention undivided. After what had been said by some gentlemen with regard to this bill, he was very anxious that a discussion should take place, as he conceived that it had not been understood.

Mr. *Whitbread* was surprised that, though the bill had been so long in agitation, the schedules had never been produced.

ORDER OF COUNCIL.

The report of the bill for continuing the act of Council was brought up, read, and agreed to, and on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the House again went into the Committee to consider certain clauses that were to be offered.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that after an intercourse which had taken place between him and gentlemen from the Bank, and also from the great body of the bankers, he understood that they approved of the general principle of the clause which he had to offer to the Committee. The substance of it was to allow the Bank to repay, at different periods, in cash to those who may, at their discretion, hereafter deposit cash with them, so that no more than three-fourths of such sums should be repaid by the Bank in cash during the continuance of the present bill. This clause, he apprehended, would be of great advantage to the Bank, and to the public.

The clause being read,

Mr. *Fox* said that he could not consent to this clause. The principle of the bill itself was in its nature, such as could not be limited, namely, necessity. The same necessity that produced

duced the Order in Council, might produce another, and therefore, supposing this clause to be agreed to, there could be no real security for this pledge being kept more inviolate than former pledges had been; and he did not like to decoy men to bring in their cash to the Bank under the faith of a promise that might not be kept with them. That was not the way to restore public credit. A man who made a promise and broke it, was not likely to retrieve his credit by making another promise. The credit of a future act of parliament, could not be better than that of a former that had been disregarded. The Minister had said that the Bank Directors approved of this clause; he did not deny it, but the Minister was not the best authority upon that subject. Directors were members of the House, and they should come forward to declare how that matter stood; and even if they declared their approbation, he could not assent to the clause, for the reason which he had already stated, namely, that he did not like to decoy men into the humour of parting from their property upon the faith of a promise which may be as easily broken as similar promises have been, for in such case he would be a party to a delusion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that it had always been possible for an act of the acknowledged legislature of the country to supersede the expectations of individuals: but it did not from that appear likely that government would take away the money lodged by individuals in the Bank, in consequence of the present clause, nor that it would be unwise in them to exercise their discretion. Every means of gradual accumulation was wanted. The present was a measure that would accelerate every point which the hon. gentleman had so often dwelt upon as necessary to restore the credit of the Bank. Up to that moment, there was not a shilling taken from the Bank. The cash of the Bank so far from being exhausted, was not diminished. As to the present measure, it was strongly recommended by the Bank Directors, who were of opinion that it would produce very important effects. Every man who had money would feel the inconvenience of keeping it hoarded by him, and would therefore deposit as much of it in the Bank as he could spare from his present wants. It would thus happen, that the general principles of banking would be kept alive on a separate fund. On what grounds, then, could it be stated, that this was a decoy to induce individuals to place their money within the reach of government? Did not every monied man
know

know all the circumstances of the case as well as the hon. gentleman? Could he suppose that they would run into danger with their eyes open? The care, therefore, which the hon. gentleman had for the monied men, was that of not allowing them even to use their own discretion, in doing a thing that would tend to accelerate a great public object. It was a singular mode of promoting the interest of individuals, to prevent that of the public.

Mr. Fox was not satisfied with the reasons of the Minister upon this subject. His object was, that credit should be restored. That did not depend upon promises and engagements, but upon the faithful performance of them. Besides, there was mischief in the practice of preferring one promise to another. The promise that was made to the public, prior to the 26th of February, had been violated, and was to continue to be violated during the continuance of this bill, but the promise made in the month of March was to be kept. This preference of one promise to another, was no more the way to restore credit to those who made it, than it was the way to preserve the beauty of a park to cut down a beautiful tree full of bloom and vigour, for the purpose of planting another in its stead, under the hope that it would soon take the same root and possess the same vigour, as that which had been an hundred years in coming to its maturity. He thought that before parliament entered into any new promises or engagements, they should discharge their old ones.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the Bank and bankers agreed to this clause, although the Bank had not particularly desired it. There was nothing compulsory in the clause, but it was thought that it would be productive of benefit to the public, by causing money to flow more freely into the Bank. Mr. Pitt insisted that the right hon. gentleman had fortified his objections, by stating extreme cases, as if, because a positive engagement had once been suspended for a short limited time, in a case of necessity, and for the eventual public advantage, that therefore it could never be expected, that any future engagement would be fulfilled. In the present instance, the Bank was placed in a situation wherein they might be allowed to make payments on demand, without interfering with those circumstances which had prevented the former engagements from being regularly fulfilled.

Alderman Curtis supported the clause, being convinced that

that it would tend to restore public credit, and that when once the Bank was opened to receive gold, according to the proviso now under consideration, they would receive it in great abundance, as there was no real want of that metal.

Mr. *Tierney* could not bring himself to approve of this clause, not conceiving it to be founded on common honesty or common prudence. It was not necessary for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that this clause was at the desire of the Bank, nor to say it was at the desire of the bankers; for the latter would profit pretty handsomely by it, at the expence of their customers. He should be glad to see the worthy Alderman who spoke last going to the Bank with 1000 guineas and refusing to pay one hundred in cash for the convenience of his customer. He asked, whether this was to be called common honesty? With respect to the prudence of the measure, he would state this case: a banker might go to the Bank with 1000 guineas; at his pleasure, or at stated periods, he could draw out of the Bank 750 of those guineas; and this while he was bound to pay his customer only in paper. Thus the cash, instead of coming to the public, would go into the hands of the bankers; and this at a time of great alarm with respect to public credit, and when, to increase that alarm, so strong a measure was to be proposed by the Minister as that of sending more money to the Emperor. If the Minister had endeavoured to invent a measure to empower bankers to increase the alarm for want of cash, he could not have hit upon a better to answer such a purpose.

Mr. *Dent* denied that when the parties immediately concerned, agreed to a measure, as was the case with regard to the present clause, that they could be fairly said to be decoyed into it. The bankers, so far from having an overplus of cash, had been in the practice of drawing considerable sums weekly from the Bank. He did not admit that a banker made an interest of his Bank notes at the expence of his customers. Mr. *Dent* insisted, that no good reason had been adduced why the clause should not be adopted. It could do no harm, and it might, and he trusted it would do good, although he might not be so sanguine as some gentlemen, respecting the extent to which it was supposed this measure would benefit the country.

Mr. *H. Thornton* said that he was glad that the clause had attracted the attention of the House, because he had no doubt that it would be found, on consideration, to be so reasonable

sonable as to be adopted by them, and because also the notice of it which had been taken, would serve to announce it to the public. He hoped it would now be understood that a clause was to be introduced into this bill, which would operate in some measure as an immediate, though a partial opening of the bank. From the time of the bank's acting on this clause, any person who might have a superfluous quantity of cash, might by paying it into the bank in sums of 500*l.* save himself from the trouble and expence of keeping it at home without interest, and might count on receiving back three-fourths of it, nearly, if not exactly, at the periods when he might want it. Mr. Thornton combated the idea of there being any dishonesty in the clause, by remarking that he could not conceive that any banker would avail himself of the clause, by paying his own guineas into the bank, unless he first began to pay indiscriminately, those customers who asked guineas from him. He said, that he had received several accounts from country banks, stating, that they were in no want of guineas, and he had learnt from some, that they had a superabundance of them. He said also, that in London, he understood guineas not to be scarce, and that he assumed that bankers, who had plenty of cash, and who had entered into the association to discourage payments in guineas, would either no longer consider themselves as bound by their agreement after the bill, with this clause, should have passed, or that they would, by public meeting, or other means, release themselves from the supposed engagement, not to make general cash payments.

The objection made on the ground of its being unfair to refuse to pay cash to a customer, while paying cash into the bank, was therefore unfounded. As to the objection, of the clause being dishonest in regard to the bank, he put the case (which he said he did merely hypothetically) of a new Corporation being established, into which all persons should be permitted, for the sake of general convenience, to make cash payments on terms agreed upon. Would this be dishonest? Certainly not. Why, therefore, was it dishonest for the parliament to make the same bank of England which had been the repository of cash before, to become the repository for it, in respect to all future payments. It was for the public benefit that it should be so. The country banks and others wanted such repository into which they might put their superfluous cash. Circumstanced as the country now was, and as it would continue to be if the bill passed without this

this clause, there was no inducement for country bankers to issue their accustomed paper circulation, by which issue alone, the guineas now in circulation could be spared out of it, and could be sent up to London. He insisted that it was necessary to begin with providing a repository of cash, from whence those who issued notes might get cash to answer their notes, if they should want it before the issue of notes could be expected. No banker would issue notes while he was obliged to retain all the guineas to answer them in his own hands, for such a trade could have no profit attending it. If this clause should pass, he trusted that bankers in the country would begin upon the credit of it to extend gradually their circulation, and would send the guineas which they might collect to the place which had always been the repository for those circulating on having three-fourths of them returned, if necessary. Mr. Thornton further remarked, that he thought the clause might be very important in another view. An observation had been justly made some days ago in the House, that the æra of the bank's opening again would be an æra of apprehension and difficulty, and that the bank Directors themselves would feel a difficulty in knowing whether at three months end to open or not. He said he thought that this clause would enable them to judge whether to open then, or whether they might not even anticipate the time; for by observing whether the guineas paid into them by virtue of this clause were called out again in any great quantities or not, they would be able to form a tolerable judgment on the subject. It was a mistake to suppose that it required a certain quantity of specie bearing a proportion to the outstanding notes, in order to give security for the punctual payments of a bank. The specie should be proportioned, not to the notes out, but to the probable current demand. Suppose, for instance, that the bank at the end of the three months should have a given quantity of guineas in its coffers, yet surely it would make a material point for their consideration, whether the foreign exchanges were favourable to their opening or otherwise. If the foreign exchanges were such as to imply that guineas were flowing into the country instead of flowing out of it, surely no one would deny that they might open in that case with a much smaller quantity of guineas than if the current was flowing the other way. In like manner if they knew that guineas were flowing into the bank from the country,

antecedent to the end of the three months, instead of flowing from the bank, though permitted to do so, they might venture to open with a much smaller stock of guineas in hand. This clause then would enable the bank to know which way the tide was running before they decided whether they would open. To decide without it, was in some measure like deciding without knowing how the foreign exchanges stood. This clause would save them from the necessity of determining blindfolded; they would be able to calculate what was their situation, and he repeated, that as to all their future transactions, they would, by means of it, become almost the same sort of bank of England which they had been heretofore, and that their being so, would certainly be one of the best means of restoring general credit.

Mr. *Sheridan* thought the proposition was puzzling and doubtful in its operation. If, as the honourable gentleman had stated, this measure constituted the bank a sort of new Corporation, then he doubted whether the old bank, and holders of old notes would consider themselves upon an equal footing of security with the former. He said it was the first time he had ever heard of bankers who scorned to make any interest of the money of their customers. In virtue of this clause, the bankers would make an advantage of three fourths of their customers' gold, and put the remaining one fourth into jeopardy. He denied that this clause would prevent money from being hoarded up, as three-fourths of the money deposited in the bank would most probably lie there; and it was of little consequence to the public whether the money was hoarded up in the bank, or in the coffers of individuals. He was also against the clause, because it gave a preference to bankers over merchants and others.

Messrs *Thurton* and *Fox* explained.

Mr. *Tierney* persisted in his objections to the clause, on the ground of its putting it into the power of City bankers to embarrass the bank at any particular time, by making large demands, a circumstance which was not at all unlikely, as he knew from very good authority there was not at present a very good understanding subsisting between them and the bank, therefore, he said, he meant to propose a clause that bankers should not be allowed to pay into the bank, the money of their customers without their express consent. In his opinion the operation of this clause would go to bring
almost

almost all the cash in the kingdom within the gripe of the bankers.

The clause was agreed to without a division.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* brought up a clause to enable the bank, notwithstanding the present restriction, to issue for the accommodation of the private bankers in the metropolis, a sum in cash not exceeding 100,000*l.* which was adopted without any discussion.

After some observations from Mr. *Sheridan*, and a few words in explanation from Mr. *Pitt*, the clause was agreed to.

Mr. Alderman *Combe* called the attention of the Committee to what he conceived to be a matter of much more disgrace and inconvenience than even the consequences of personal arrest. He meant the situation in which tenants were then placed, without any proviso whatever in their favour of having their goods distrained for rent, though they might offer in payment notes of the bank of England. He should therefore propose a clause in their favour by which the tender of bank notes for rent due should be considered as a legal tender. As the law now stood, the Sheriff's officers might proceed to a public sale of their goods, notwithstanding an absolute offer on their part of discharging the rent due in notes, which, in the present crisis, he considered a hardship of a very distressing nature. He, therefore, merely wished to place such creditors in the same situation as others; but his clause did not go to prevent an action by law.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* observed, that the clause proposed by the worthy Magistrate, appeared in his opinion to call for very mature consideration, before it could be received. He wished to be understood that he did not deliver any settled opinion, either for or against such a clause, but he only requested that the honourable gentleman, having given notice of his intention, would defer moving the clause, till some subsequent stage of the bill, or bring it in by way of rider. The Committee would, in the mean time, be at liberty to reflect on the benefit or disadvantage that might result from it. With respect to himself, he could not at that moment express any final opinion on it. Much had been already done with regard to the circulation of bank notes, and the House could not act in too cautious a manner in carrying measures of the same nature to a further extent.

After some observations from Sir *W. Pulteney* in favour

of the tendency of the clause proposed, Mr. Alderman *Combe* agreed to postpone it to some future period.

The House being resumed, Mr. *Hobart* was proceeding to bring up the report, when

Sir *W. Pulteney* observed, that he understood it was the custom of the House not to receive the report of any Bill on the same day with the Committee, when the clauses of such Bill happened to have been the subject of debate.

The *Speaker* stated, that certainly the custom of the House was, not to receive the report on the same day that the Committee agreed to the resolutions, whenever any material difference of opinion existed with respect to the clauses of the Bill.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* agreed to the point of practice as laid down by the Speaker, and declared he had no objection to postpone the receiving the report for a short time.

Sir *W. Pulteney* then proposed that the report be received on Monday, and debated on Tuesday.

The *Speaker* having observed, that in such a case the clauses of the Bill might be separately considered, but not the whole of the Bill, the report was ordered to be received on Monday next.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee of Supply came to the following resolutions:

That 147,165l. 10s. 11d. be granted for In and Out Pensioners of Chelsea Hospital for 1797, and 11,602l. 7s. 3d. for Widows Pensioners for 1797.

Adjourned to Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *April 3.*

CALL OF THE HOUSE.

The House was called over pursuant to the order of the day, and such members as were absent ordered to attend on Monday next. It was also ordered, that the House be called over again on Tuesday the 11th instant.

IMPERIAL LOAN.

Mr. *Sheridan* moved for the production of all the representations of the Bank Directors relative to advances made to the Emperor since November, 1794, together with the answers of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the same, exclusive of the papers laid before the House to the same effect. Ordered.

BANK INDEMNITY BILL.

The report of the Bank Bill was read.

Mr.

Mr. *Tierney* rose to move an amendment on the clause brought up by Mr. Pitt in the Committee on the Bill; but the Speaker suggested, that it would be more regular to propose the amendment as a distinct clause.

Mr. *Tierney* therefore moved the following clause: "Provided always, and be it hereby enacted, that nothing therein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to any case wherein a banker, &c. who may have been held to special bail, shall not have made an affidavit that he, she, &c. did not, at the time of the arrest, possess the whole, or three-fourths, in cash of the sum for which they were arrested."

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* asked what the principle was upon which the House proceeded? It was, that bankers might retain specie enough to pay the fractional parts of the sums demanded of them. If they were to be forced to pay the whole in cash, one demand might sweep away all the cash they had. The clause proposed was consequently against the principle of the Bill, and therefore he opposed it.

The clause was negatived.

Several of the amendments made by the Committee in the Bill were read.

Sir *W. Pulteney* conceived, that if Government were at liberty to interfere with the Bank, without the consent of the Bank, it would be a most dangerous power. He therefore moved an additional clause to the Bill, viz.

"Provided always, and be it hereby enacted, that the Bill shall have no effect, unless the Directors of the Bank shall certify to the Speaker, on or before the third reading, that the restriction was at their special instance and request."

Upon this clause the House divided:

<i>Ayes</i>	—	45
<i>Noes</i>	—	86
		Majority 41

On the question for the Bill being engrossed,

Sir *W. Pulteney* expressed a wish, that a shorter period should be fixed for the duration of the Bill. The Bill was ordered to be engrossed, and read a third time on Wednesday.

CORN EXPORTATION BILL.

The report of the Bill for amending the Corn Exportation and Importation Act was brought up.

On the amendment for leaving out the word "Barley" being read, a conversation took place.

Sir *A. Ferguson* expressed his objection to allowing barley to

to be alone exported, because it would tend to encourage the growth of that article to the detriment of other sorts of grain.

Mr. *Coke* (of Norfolk) was for the exportation of barley. He moved, that the word "barley" should be re-inserted in the Bill.

Mr. Alderman *Curtis* was against it.

Mr. *Hobhouse* suggested, that barley, in many parts, furnished the poor with their only food.

Mr. *Ryder* defended the principle of the Bill.

Sir *W. Pulteney* complained that the mercantile interest always prevailed with Government over the landed. The reason was, that the former were a united body, and that the latter were not.

Mr. *Milbanke* said a few words in favour of the exportation.

The question being called for, a division took place.

<i>Ayes</i>	—	51
<i>Noes</i>	—	75
<i>Majority</i>		24

BANK CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that as he understood there would be some difficulty in procuring the papers which he had moved for, between the Bank Directors and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, from the Bank, in due time for his motion the next day; and as he understood there were copies of those papers at present before the Secret Committee, he thought it would be more convenient to have the copies from that Committee laid before the House, as they would certainly be of great importance.

Mr. *Dudley Ryder* doubted whether it would be proper to have them laid before the House in that way.

The *Speaker* informed the honourable Gentleman, that the mode for having the copies before the Committee laid regularly before the House, would be, to move that the Committee should make a report of the evidence before them on such and such points. At the same time he conjectured the honourable Gentleman only wished to suggest the manner in which he thought the order of the House for the production of the papers might be complied with,

The papers were then ordered to be communicated.

The other orders of the day were severally read, and deferred. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, April 4.

Lord Cadogan's Divorce Bill passed a Committee of the whole House. Mr.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* brought up a paper which contained the names and places of abode of the aliens in the cities of London and Westminster, taken, from house to house, under the order and direction of the Lord Mayor and Magistrates.— Order to be laid on the table, and to be printed.

ADVANCES TO THE EMPEROR.

Mr. *Sheridan* then rose, in pursuance of his notice, to call the attention of the House to the subject of making further advances to the Emperor, and proceeded to the following effect.

It is unnecessary for me to say any thing upon the importance of the subject which stands for discussion this day. I must, however, observe, that such discussion must be attended with some embarrassment. I have before me but a choice of difficulties; for, as it is important that the discussion which I bring forward should be made as early as possible, so it is also highly desirable that the decision of the House should be grounded on proper information. I believe there never was a subject brought before Parliament which occupied more of anxiety in the public mind, and to which the public looked with more impatience, than they do at this hour, for the decision of this House upon the subject of a future loan to be advanced to the Emperor. It is a point which, in my opinion, involves the question, whether they are to be saved or ruined? And it is to his Imperial Majesty himself highly important to know, as speedily as possible, and before he commences the most important campaign that was, perhaps, ever opened in Europe, what is the determination of this House upon the subject of sending money out of this country at this awful moment. It is essential for the people of this country to know what is to be taken from them, and essential for his Imperial Majesty to know upon what he is to rely. In discussing this momentous question, I am ready to admit that, whatever I may think of the necessity or the prudence of advances that have been already made by us to foreign powers, we should at all events keep good faith; and therefore it is highly important, indeed essential, to our welfare, that we consider duly before we encourage in the Emperor a hope that he is to have any aid from us in the future prosecution of this war. With this view of the subject I moved for certain accounts, from which the House might collect information, and such as I took to be essential. To that motion there ought to have been made a return very different from that small scratch which is exhibited on the paper now before us, and which I took into my hand just as I came into the House. I was in hopes, when I made
the

the motion yesterday, and as I took pains to explain it to a right honourable Gentleman before the rising of the House, that the whole of the information I wanted, and which my motion called for, would have been laid before the House to-day; but I understood that there was much difficulty in complying with the whole request, and that great embarrassment would arise from that compliance, on account of many of the papers which I wanted being before a Committee now engaged in an important enquiry, who could not deliver copies of them consistently with the secrecy which is at present a part of their duty to observe. I determined not to press any further now for these papers. Under these circumstances I feel that I come forward under great disadvantages; the information being imperfect. Had we the whole before us, I should feel it my duty to call upon the House to declare that no more money should be sent to the Emperor. Indeed, if the information were complete, I think the House would see that sending any more money from this country at this moment would be out of the question. I have heard it said, that it would be proper for me to abstain from the discussion of this question until after the Committee shall have made their report on the necessity or propriety of the Order in Council, by which the Bank were called upon to stop payment. I am ready to confess I saw no necessity for any such delay. I never did think it necessary to wait for the result of the enquiry of that Committee in the point of view in which I mean to place the present question before the House. What I chiefly wished for, and lamented is not before us, is the whole of the correspondence between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Bank Directors, since the year 1794, upon the subject of sending money to the Emperor. If the right honourable Gentleman wishes to come to a free discussion of the question, Whether it be essential to the true interests of this country that further advances should be made to the Emperor at this moment, under all the circumstances by which we are surrounded, whatever may have been the opinion of the Bank Directors, and without entering into any calculations that have been made by them respecting the trade and commerce of this country? I shall be ready to argue the subject with him in that way; and I shall not desire the opinion of the Bank Directors. I think the subject may be now discussed without their opinions, as far as the motion with which I shall conclude will call for that discussion. Had I waited, I might have the whole of the opinions which have been given from time to time to the Bank Directors, upon the subject of advances, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but
I did

I did not see the absolute necessity of doing so. Some may say it is premature to enquire into the question of prudence in advancing more money to the Emperor, before we have had a complete investigation of the causes which led to the Order in Council, by which the Bank were directed to stop payment. That appears to me to be very unwise counsel, for by it you may be led to defer the remedy until it is too late. It may be said that you should not apply your remedy until you know the cause of the disorder; that, I own, is figuratively very correct, but if you attempt to carry it into practice it may be fatal to the patient. If a physician were to order that neither a bandage nor a styptic should be applied to a bleeding wound until he had discovered the cause of the complaint, his patient would stand in danger of dying, before the remedy could be applied by this deliberate and methodical physician. Or, if the Humane Society were to order that no person should be attempted to be brought to active life from a state of suspended animation, until the coroner's inquest had sat upon the body and brought in their verdict, "*Felo de se; death by the visitation of Providence; accidental death, or murder by some persons unknown,*" I apprehend their efforts would not be very useful. Here we are, I admit it, in a state of *suspended animation*; or, if we are murdered, it is by persons who are much too well known. Having made these preliminary observations, I shall now proceed upon the more immediate points of the subject which it is the business of this House to investigate this day.

A worthy baronet (Sir Wm. Pulteney) has given his opinion upon part of this subject already. I have already said that I differed from that opinion. It is not necessary now to recite that opinion, nor to enter at large into that which constitutes the difference between us. I hope that public credit will be revived, and that in the person of the Bank of England. I am also confident, that whether you endeavour to establish a Bank upon the faith of the landed property of this country, or whether you try any other means, that no such attempts should ever be made until you are entirely satisfied that public credit cannot be restored in the person of the Bank of England.

From the rumours I have heard abroad, and from the papers which I did not see until within ten minutes of my commencing my address to you this day, it appears that the Bank of England have made a stand against the Minister on the subject of sending money out of this country. I always thought that unless they could satisfactorily explain the cause of their compliance with the Minister's demands, they acted

in a manner, for which they deserved to be much blamed, if they were not guilty of great criminality. But, although I think still that they were much to blame for their compliance with the Minister's demands, yet, I think them infinitely less so than the Minister himself. I say this with satisfaction, and I hope it will be some satisfaction to the public, for the less the Bank are to blame, the less the public have to lament, for the Bank is a corporation which was instituted to pay the public creditor, and unless they shall do something that shall forfeit their charter, this House cannot, consistently with its public duty, throw any impediments in the way of the Bank in its payment of that public creditor. Now, with respect to the conduct of the Bank, however suspicious that conduct might be at first, at the end of the year 1794, we find that they remonstrated with the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the subject of sending money out of the kingdom. It appears that the Minister from time to time made promises of repayment of the money which he drew from the Bank, and from time to time, as constantly broke his promise. If it should appear that the Bank made these remonstrances against the proceedings of the Minister; if it should appear, that notwithstanding these remonstrances from the Bank, the Minister deluded them with promises, and sometimes terrified them with threats, insinuating that if they did not comply with his request, the public should look to them as the authors of the ruin of the public service, although the Directors were blameable in complying with his request, yet, they were blameable only in a secondary view, the great and ostensible character on which the censure should fall, is the Minister himself. Let us have recourse to some of the documents upon this subject. I say some of them, because they are not all before us.

On the 3d of December, 1795, the Court of Directors of the Bank came to the following resolution, which was communicated to the Minister:

Resolved, That the following resolution of the Court be communicated to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

That the Court of Directors, after a very solemn deliberation, adequate to the importance of the subject, are unanimously of opinion, that should such a loan * take place, they are but too well grounded in declaring (from the actual effects of the Emperor's last loan, and the continued drains of specie and bullion they still experience) that they have the most cogent reasons to apprehend very momentous and alarming consequences.

They are therefore led to hope (after expressing their acknowledgments to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for having hinted that the welfare and safety of the Bank should in this matter supersede every other consideration) that he will be pleased to lay aside the adoption of such a measure, which they beg leave to repeat, would be in their opinion most fatal in its consequences.

* Viz. A loan of 3,000,000l. to the Emperor.

On

On the 14th of January, 1796, the Court of Directors came to the following opinion, which was likewise communicated to the Minister!

It is the opinion of the Committee of Treasury, that the Governor and Deputy Governor should represent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that they cannot look upon the scheme of assisting the Emperor to raise a loan in Germany, by the guarantee of the Parliament of Great Britain in any light which will not, one way or other, be detrimental to this country, even if a law were passed by Parliament to prevent British subjects from taking any share therein.

That such a call for money in Germany will occasion demands of it from hence, German, Italian, and other foreign capitalists, who have property here, will be induced to draw it away.

People in Holland, who by the late acts have money locked up here, may go to Germany, and draw for it from thence.

That funds, which would otherwise be employed in speculations of trade with England, may by such an opportunity of investment at home, be diverted from the one to the other purpose.

That the Exchange between this country and Hamburg may be much affected by it.

That, in spite of legal prohibitions, it is to be apprehended that some people here would take shares in such a negociation, under the names of their foreign correspondents.

From these and other causes, they are fully of opinion, that the Governor and Deputy Governor can give no advice to Mr. Pitt in favour of such a measure; which is indeed of a wide political extent, and beyond the line of their duty to judge of.

These are but a small part of the proofs that ought to be before us, the rest is still more important to shew the premeditated design of the Minister, and his obstinate perseverance, notwithstanding the declared opinions which were given upon the subject from the authorities to which I have alluded.

On the 11th of February, 1796, there was formed the following resolution:

Resolved, That is the opinion of this Court, founded upon its experience of the effects of the late Imperial loan, That if any further loan or advance of money to the Emperor, or to any other foreign state, should in the present state of affairs take place, it will in all probability prove fatal to the Bank of England.

The Court of Directors do therefore most earnestly deprecate the adoption of any such measure; and they solemnly protest against any responsibility for the calamitous consequences that may follow thereupon.

Resolved, That the Governor and Deputy Governor do communicate these resolutions to the Chancellor of his Majesty's Exchequer.

The House shall now hear the answers of the Minister to these opinions and remonstrances:

ANSWER TO THE FIRST.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer having perused the resolution with great attention, repeatedly said, that certainly, as matters were there stated, he should not think at present of bringing forward such a measure; adding, that though he should, in opening the budget, make it known that he made reserve with the present contractors for the loan, to permit the Emperor's raising three millions, should circumstances require it, he should lay aside all thoughts of it, unless the situation of things, relative to the Bank, should so alter as to render such loan of no importance or inconvenience to them in perspective.

The Governor promised him, that should such a change take place, and he should

wish for the adoption of such a measure, he certainly would communicate it to him with pleasure.

Mr. Pitt wished very much to have the paper left with him for the purpose of communicating its contents to the Cabinet, if he found it necessary; promising, that no one should have a sight of it elsewhere, and that if the Governor would call upon him in two or three days, he would return it to him.

ANSWER TO THE SECOND.

Mr. Pitt replied, that after the repeated intimations which he had given to the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank, that no further loan to the Emperor would be resolved on without previous communication with the Bank, and due consideration of the state of their circumstances, he did not see any reason for these resolutions; that he did suppose they were adopted in a moment of alarm, and that he should consider them in that light.

After this solemn promise, and after expressing his idea that the last resolution was adopted in the moment of alarm, he agreed to send a million and a half to the Emperor without the knowledge of Parliament, and with a determination that Parliament should not know it. If I am not misinformed, all the advances that were made to Ministers were accompanied with very strong remonstrances against the mischievous tendency which they had on the credit of the Bank, and which remonstrances were answered by repeated assurances that the sums should be punctually repaid. If what I have heard upon this subject be true, the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought not only to dread the anger of the public for his conduct in this business, but he ought to be ashamed even to face the Cabinet itself. On the 6th of October commenced the present session of Parliament; now mark the words which the present Minister put into the mouth of the sovereign on that day in addressing the two Houses of Parliament. His Majesty was made to say on that day, amongst other things,

I rely on your zeal and public spirit for such supplies as you may think necessary for the service of the year. It is a great satisfaction to me to observe that notwithstanding the temporary embarrassments which have been experienced, the state of the commerce, manufactures and revenue of the country, proves the real extent and solidity of our resources, and furnishes you such means as must be equal to any exertions which the present crisis may require.

I say that when these words were uttered, the Chancellor of the Exchequer knew from the representations of the Bank, he knew from the past exertions made to supply the Emperor, the Bank would be unable to continue its advances, without being in danger of that which has since actually happened, and after all the Minister endeavoured to save the credit of the Bank by compelling it to declare a public bankruptcy; all this he knew when he penned the speech to which I have alluded, and he has deliberately put into the mouth of the sovereign, that which he, the Minister, knew to be a falsehood. He cannot plead ignorance
of

of these things, he had no means of avoiding the knowledge of them. The bank, I own, were blameable in complying with the Minister's demands, but he was criminal in making such demands. The loans avowed, and the loan concealed, brought the bank to its present condition; in which we see it is unable to pay the public creditor.

I now come to the Order in Council. The whole of that proceeding is founded upon the representation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. None of the proceedings which led to that Order are in writing I believe; they keep no journal; I wish they did, and I wish that the minutes of that business were before this House. I should like that the House should see, Whether the representations made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any resemblance to truth. To see, Whether he laid before the Council the various remonstrances that were made to him by the Directors of the bank. Whether he informed the Council of one word of the reproaches of the bank. I say, I wish these things could be brought before the public. All that appears upon that subject is, that the Order in Council was made upon the mere assertion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. —These are the words of the Order in Council:

Upon the representation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, stating that from the result of the information which he has received, and of the enquiries which it has been his duty to make respecting the effect of the unusual demands for specie, that have been made upon the metropolis, in consequence of ill-founded or exaggerated alarms in different parts of the country, it appears that unless some measure is immediately taken, there may be reason to apprehend a want of a sufficient supply of cash to answer the exigencies of the public service. It is the unanimous opinion of the Board, that it is indispensably necessary for the public service, that the Directors of the bank of England should forbear issuing any cash in payment until the sense of Parliament can be taken on that subject, and the proper measures adopted thereupon, for maintaining the means of circulation, and supporting the public and commercial credit of the kingdom at this important conjuncture; and it is ordered, that a copy of this minute be transmitted to the Directors of the bank of England, and they are hereby required on the grounds of the exigency of the case to conform thereto until the sense of Parliament can be taken as aforesaid.

Now, I ask, was this a representation of the truth? Or was it a falsehood? Was the pressure arising from the unusual demands for specie that were made upon the metropolis? Or was it not the gradually growing result of that which was repeatedly stated by the bank to the Chancellor of the Exchequer? I say it was from the latter, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer knew it, and it is an aggravation of his guilt that he abused the unsuspecting temper of his Majesty, who was present at this council, by misrepresenting the fact.

I have stated all I know authentically of what passed between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the bank upon this

this important subject. We have the opinion of the bank upon the question, and that opinion has been verified by the event. But even if that opinion had been falsified by the event, we ought not to continue in the same course, for if it had not happened yet, it is a thing to which the Minister's conduct must infallibly lead. Setting this matter aside, I am ready to admit at once, that if it were essential to the safety of this country, that we should advance more money to the Emperor, we ought to agree to it. I am willing to go further, and to admit that the proof of the danger on the expediency of sending money to the Emperor lies upon us, and that if we cannot prove that danger, we are bound to call upon the people still to exert themselves to continue this foreign aid. Now upon this subject, I say that the whole argument and proof is on my side. I agree that we have not the whole evidence before us: we certainly have only a part of it; we have, however, a sample by which we may judge of the whole: and although it is fair to say generally that we should not form a conclusion without the whole of the evidence, yet we may safely say that the Minister has not chosen to lay before them that which makes his own case the worst, and kept back that which would have made it better. We have the opinion and remonstrance of the bank against the proceedings, expressing a fear that the bank may be ruined by such means; we have, moreover, the opinion verified to a certain extent by the event; we therefore cannot rationally hesitate in saying that the Minister had acted culpably; and that therefore we ought to doubt a good deal the propriety of granting another loan to the Emperor. But I will meet the question fairly and broadly. I will admit, that if the interest of this country demands it, we ought even now to struggle with our difficulties, and grant the Emperor another loan. I say I admit this, and I am not surprised to see gentlemen on the other side glad to hear this concession; they ought to be so; it is a liberal concession, because there is no probability whatever of any repayment of any sum of money that may be sent to the Emperor. I cannot help fortifying this observation, by referring shortly to the conduct of the Emperor; after receiving our money, he was to pay to us the principal by instalments, to secure to us the interest in an undeniable manner, and to appoint commissioners here to transact this business punctually. These were the three leading heads of the engagement of his Imperial Majesty; he has performed
neither;

neither; for he has not paid any one of the instalments; he has not secured to us the interest, nor has he appointed any commissioners to transact the business here. But I was not correct when I said we had no security for the repayment of what we have already advanced to the Emperor; we certainly have the best of all possible security, for he has undertaken already to pay us when we advance him more. Nothing can be more clear than this: if one man owes another 100*l.* and prevails upon his creditor to lend him as much more, he is thereby enabled at least to give a good security for the payment of the first debt. But it may be said that we have mortgaged the estate of the Emperor; I admit we have, but the misfortune is, that we are not mortgagees in possession, and I am afraid, that a considerable time must elapse before we are, unless we can prevail upon the French to give up the Low Countries. If the Emperor has sufficient to pay us this mortgage, that is one reason why we should be content with the security we have; but it is no reason why we should advance him more. But I will not dwell upon this point. I will admit, as I have said already, that if it is to the interest of this country to grant to the Emperor another loan, we ought to try to grant it. I am aware that it may be said, that if we stop now it will be an indirect means of forcing the Emperor to make peace. I will not now contend with those from whom I have always differed, and now differ as much as I ever did, as to the justice and necessity of this war; I will not now contend with them, and maintain that it is impolitic to consider this as a war of extermination. I will not contend with those who think that all the regular Governments of Europe should make a common cause with the Emperor; I will not say one word to any such persons as these upon the justice, the wisdom, the policy of their system; it is not necessary for my present purpose that I should do so, because the proposition which I shall submit to the House to-night, is such as that even these gentlemen may agree to it without abandoning one of their favourite sentiments. That a loan from us will be a facility to the Emperor is not a question. Nor has it been ever proved that the Emperor may not carry on the war without a loan from us. I say that has never been proved, nor attempted to be proved. I will not put the point in the way a noble Lord put it in this House, that no power could make a stand long without regular means. We have a great and tremendous proof of the possibility of that in the efforts of the

the French, for when they were destitute of almost all regular means, they put their enemies to flight although they possessed all such means. We were told afterwards that they were actuated by enthusiasm, and that would be of short duration. They were actuated by the spirit which arises from a consciousness of the justice of their cause, which steeled their nerves and led them to battle, and which made them victorious in the field; that was the enthusiasm which they felt, and which they still feel, and which is evident from their actions every day; and if we are to be told that the troops of the Emperor cannot feel the same species of enthusiasm, our money, however, lavishly bestowed, will avail him nothing; his cause is a lost cause. By giving such sums you will encrease your own distress, hasten your own destruction, but you will not aid the Emperor to any effectual purpose. I say, therefore, that the only thing that you can do to retrieve yourselves is to desire the Emperor to make for himself the same sort of sacrifice that you have made for him. You should immediately set about the labour of restoring your public credit, without which you will soon be nothing in the scale of nations. Your public credit is the very marrow of your bone, or the vital spirit, or the essence of your existence. I am, perhaps, to blame for dwelling upon a point so obvious; but let me intreat of this House to consider the present condition of this country. If you grant another loan to the Emperor, twenty-six millions a year will not be sufficient to pay your peace establishment. You must lay upon the people five millions of additional taxes every year. These are not slight considerations; but there are others of as much importance, and which the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows to be so. How, I would ask, are taxes to be raised at all without the restoration of public credit? Look at the situation of those territories which bring you temporary aid, and upon which a right honourable gentleman (Mr. Dundas) speaks occasionally with seeming triumph. I mean the East Indies. Consider the situation of the Nabob of Arcot. I believe that the general aspect of your affairs there is not very encouraging to you. With regard to the West Indies, if you mean to pursue the plan you have adopted this war, in which you have sported with the lives of multitudes, and squandered millions of money only to purchase graves for the troops you may send there hereafter, you can neither expect nor deserve any thing but your ruin. We were told

told lately from high authority in this House, that money, and nothing but money, will do to pay the army. We were told that the internal peace of this country requires that to be the mode of payment, and that without it the spirit of discontent would be such, that neither the property nor the person of any of this House would be safe. I do not admit that to be true; but it was the assertion of the Minister, and proves, to him particularly, that we ought not to be prodigal of our specie, especially in sending it abroad. Look at Ireland, which is now in a state of detestable civil war, brought on by the oppressive measures of Ministers. It is not a month since Mr. Pelham declared, that a million and a half of your gold must be sent to that country. Compare the situation in which you stood twelve months ago with your situation at this hour. This very day twelvemonths your five per cents. were at 101. and your three per cents. at 69 and a half. This day your five per cents. are at 73 and a quarter, and your three per cents. at 49 and an half. Such is the difference in the value of your funded property in the course only of one year. What may be the result of another, is a calculation that strikes too much terror in my mind to venture to enter upon it. Is there any thing to be done to relieve us? Yes. What is that? The restoration of public credit. Without that restoration, your ruin, I say, is inevitable. It may be said that I am viewing only the dark side of the picture. I own I have no pleasure in doing so, but it is a side which you ought to view; and it is owing to your unwillingness to view the dark side of your situation that you are brought to the condition in which you are at this very moment. Should you pursue another plan, I am one of those who shall be the last to despond in this country. But you must not confide, as you have done, in a system of delusion; you must be vigilant, and, in future, jealous of those who have deceived you. The Bank confided, or rather complied, until they were ruined. They, indeed, foresaw the danger, and remonstrated; but remonstrated in vain, for they complied while they remonstrated. Whether the Minister deceived the Bank, or the Bank deceived themselves, is not a question now to be discussed. The Bank had constituents, whose interests they certainly neglected, to say the least of them. You have constituents, whose interests you must not neglect. You must therefore no longer confide in the wisdom or the integrity of the Minister, if it be your object to avoid the destruction of your country.

There is another point of view in which this subject may be discussed. I am aware it may be said, that endeavours to per-

suade the House not to assist the Emperor may be attended with the worst effects; for that they may retard peace. I think we have a right to say to the Emperor, that we have already done as much as we could to help him to carry on the war; that we have not only given him the last guinea we could spare, but have given him more, for that we have also given him our credit, and have, in order to assist him, plundered our country, and defrauded our public creditor; and that if he cannot carry on the war without aid, he should apply to his nearer allies for that purpose. But it may be said, that if we discontinue our assistance, the Emperor will be at the mercy of the French, and that they will dictate to him what terms of peace they think fit. I think the direct contrary will be the effect of our refusing to send any money to the Emperor. I think that nothing could be more the subject of general rejoicing, or more likely to cause an illumination in Paris, than our agreeing to send no more money to the Emperor. The only effect which would follow, would be merely a temporary thing, and would amount only to a question, Whether the Emperor should act on the Tyrol on the offensive or the defensive, at the early part of the campaign, which to the French is a matter of but little moment? If we agree to advance the Emperor any more money, they will console themselves with this truth, that such a step was the silent, but the certain, forerunner of our ruin; and they will be pleased at the thought, that they may make this island a province to France, whenever afterwards they shall think proper to attempt it.

With regard to the general safety of this country, admitting our credit to be restored, I should despair as little as any man; but I fear that some among us think, that our apprehension about public credit is ill-founded, and that if we get into the system of the French, and rely upon paper, we shall be an overmatch for them. If there is to be no regard to public credit, and national faith; if there is to be no regard to a general bankruptcy, and you chuse to put yourself upon a level with the French in that respect; if you mean to live up to the sentiment "perish our commerce;" then, indeed, I think we shall be a match for any power; for I think as highly of the pure courage of the inhabitants of this country, as I do of those of any other in the world. But I apprehend it is not the wish of the people of this country to proceed to that kind of experiment. Should we be driven to that kind of contest, and should we fall under it, our fall will be mean and paltry, such as surrounding nations will behold with contempt and derision,

sion, and the people of this country will scarcely think of their ruin without regretting: but should we even fall in the endeavour to keep up the national honour, by endeavouring to preserve the public faith, we shall fall with dignity, and we shall expire with something like an enviable glory, and foreigners would be ready to apply to us the language of an excellent modern poet:

“ England, with all thy faults, I love thee still !”

I am aware, as I have already said, that I shall be told I am viewing our condition on the gloomy side. I should be happy to be convinced of the truth of that assertion; but I am afraid that my error is on the other side. I am perfectly ready to say, without any further information, on the authority which we have before us, the truth of which we can have no reason to doubt, that, according to the dictates of plain common sense, we should not send one guinea more to the Emperor. I think we are in a state of peculiar responsibility. Though the Bank forgot that they had constituents, we must not forget that we have constituents. I think the people, whose servants we are, have a right to demand of us a faithful discharge of a great public duty. I have heard of some very strange doctrines; “ that the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them;” and “ that the Parliament of this country is erroneously called the Parliament of the People; for that, in the language of the Constitution, it is the Parliament of the King.” I care not from what authority that doctrine comes; for it is the doctrine of *pride, inscience, and ignorance*; and the higher the authority, the more gross the insult, the more scandalous the libel, and the more manifest the *treason* of the doctrine. We are bound to give the King our counsel; but if that doctrine were true, it would follow that the King could govern without a Parliament. You know full well, and you esteem, Sir, the constitutional privileges of this House; and, should any member make use of the King’s name to influence the debates of this House, you would instantly call such member to order, and rebuke him. It is necessary to repel such doctrines as these; for I know the suspicion is gone abroad that the majority of us look too much to the crown, and too little to the people. We must not forget the old jealousy of the Constitution against the influence of the Crown. We must recollect, that, if any member of this House becomes a servant of the Crown, he must go back again to his constituents to know whether, by accepting that service, he has not forfeited their confidence. I trust we shall feel that we are responsible to the

people, as the guardians of their purse, and that we shall shew it this day by our determination. But if we continue to confide in the representations and delusions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we may as well be called the Parliament of the Emperor of Germany, and the national Counsellors of the House of Austria. I hope we shall give a direct negative to that assertion. I should, for my own part, be ready to propose, that no more money should be sent abroad. But I have been willing to follow the opinion of others, and therefore my proposition will not go that length. I hope that the question will be met fairly. Indeed, I am entitled to expect it from what has already passed. I can hardly anticipate that any body, except the Chancellor of the Exchequer, should oppose my proposition, for it does not call on those who think the war is just and necessary, and wisely conducted, to alter their opinion upon those points. It only calls on the House to examine whether it be wise in us to send any more money abroad. I therefore move you a resolution,

“ That this House shall resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to enquire whether it can, consistently with its duty and regard for the essential interest of this country, under the present circumstances, permit a further loan or advances to be made to his Imperial Majesty.”

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* spoke in substance as follows: “ The speech of the honourable Gentleman who has just sat down, varied so much from his motion, and there was so little resemblance with the opinions he advanced, and the proposition with which he concluded, that I find it extremely difficult to adopt a train of argument which will bear upon both at one time. The argument of the honourable Gentleman, which he pretended to found upon a long detail of circumstances, in his opinion undeniable in point of fact; and certainly, if they are true, very serious in their nature, pointed to a conclusion, in which he premised that the House would betray their trust to their constituents if they did not join, and from which, if they ventured to dissent, he apprehended the most fatal consequences would ensue to the country. He stated the subject now under discussion, as one not to be hung up or suspended, not as one upon which information ought to be collected, and mature deliberation exercised before a decision was passed; but he described it with all that richness of imagery and aptness of allusion of which he is so much master; with even multiplied illustrations, as one on which a moment's delay ought not to be permitted; and on which to hesitate was to sacrifice the best interests of the nation. It was a case, according to him, in
which

which patience led to death. I must observe, in setting out, however, that his analogies, however various and beautiful, were not very appropriate. He represented the absurdity of enquiring into the nature of the instrument by which a wound was inflicted before bandages and styptics were applied, and the insanity of waiting for the coroner's inquest upon a person drowned before the means recommended by the Humane Society were used for his recovery. He forgot, however, that his motion, as calculated to operate upon the political malady of the State, did not correspond with the steps which ought to be taken in the first instance with a person wounded or drowned. In order to make the allusion accurate, his argument should have stated, that the continuance of remittances to the Emperor would produce an inability in the Bank to make good their money payments, or supposing that inability to have just arisen, he should have shewn, that the measure recommended in his motion was the best which could be adopted to remove that inability. It so happens, however, unfortunately for the accuracy of his allusion, that money payments have been suspended at the Bank for a considerable time; that an Order of Council was issued as the best remedy at the moment for the difficulties of the Bank; that this suspension has been recognized by the House of Commons, and that the legislature, anxious to devise the best mode of restoring the credit of that corporation by reinstating it in its former situation of solvency, has thought proper, as a fit preliminary to that deliberation, to appoint a Secret Committee to enquire into the causes of its embarrassments. This is the true state of the question. The honourable Gentleman, in his argument, represented his motion as essential to the very being of the Bank, and of the country, and as one from which the House cannot withhold its assent without sealing their own reproach and infamy, by sacrificing every trust which has been delegated to them by the nation; and when the motion was read, it turned out to be nothing more than an ambiguous attempt to make them pronounce indirectly an opinion upon a subject upon which they were not yet in possession of information sufficient to enable them to pass a fair and just decision. For though the case was of such a nature, as represented in his speech, that it could admit of neither doubt nor delay, his motion went to nothing more than the appointment of a Committee to enquire into the circumstances connected with it. Does the honourable Gentleman mean that the House should now resolve itself into that Committee, and report to-night? If this is his intention, where would be the candour of the proceeding in respect of those

those who wish for farther information, and who are unwilling to deliver an opinion till that information is collected? If he does not mean that the House should now resolve itself into this Committee, then I object to the motion as ambiguous, disingenuous, and uncandid, as capable from its nature of being understood two ways, and as tending to mislead the House upon the subject on which they are called upon to decide. The honourable gentleman knows, and the House must be aware, that every question which respects the disposal of the public money must be agitated in a Committee of the whole House, so that whether the House may think it proper to give their sanction to the honourable gentleman's argument or not, it must be in a Committee of that description which the subject will eventually come before, and in which their decision will be finally given. There is this difference, however, that at present they are not in possession of that degree of information which is necessary for them to decide upon a question of so much importance; whereas, they will then have the materials before them from which such information is to be collected. If the hon. gentleman contends that the information of which they are at present in possession, is sufficient to enable them to form a correct judgment of what ought, or of what ought not to be done, why does he not move them to come to an immediate decision, without going into a Committee at all? In short, it was as superfluous in one view, as it is inconsistent and contradictory in another. I should not think that the House, will consider it to be their duty to sanction the opinions of the honourable gentleman, upon a view of their general policy and expediency, far less that they will decide upon a subject of so much importance, with the scanty means of information now in their power; but if they mean to comply with the real object of the motion and the true wishes of the mover, let them do it in a fair and manly way, and not by assenting to a motion as ambiguous in its nature as perfidious in its designs. This much I thought it right to say upon the narrow shape of the motion: and having said so much upon the question immediately before the House, it is the less necessary for me to dwell long upon the train of argument which prefaced the proposition on which it turns. Though I differ very considerably from the honourable gentleman on many of the topics on which he touched, I entirely agree with him on the general importance of the subject; I agree with him in thinking that it is connected not only with the
fate

fate of a great and powerful empire, but with the general fate and destiny of the world ; but in proportion to its magnitude, ought to be the caution of this House in deciding upon it on narrow and confined principles. That these are domestic considerations which are highly momentous, I readily admit, but I would remind the House that there may be a narrow mode of looking at them.

Without attending to the circumstance of our having a great and powerful enemy to contend with, flushed with success, and ambitious of conquest, with means of bringing into the field more numerous armies than perhaps ever were known, and without attending to the circumstance of our insular situation, which in time of war renders a continental diversion of great consequence to our external security ; but considering it merely as a question to be decided upon the principles of œconomy, and calculating the effect which granting pecuniary remittances to his Imperial Majesty at the present moment, has a tendency to produce upon public credit, upon the success of the war, and in accelerating the period and improving the terms of peace, I have no hesitation in pronouncing an opinion, that the result of this calculation will be, that this country by sending pecuniary assistance to her magnanimous and faithful ally, will adopt the best mode of consulting real œconomy, of restoring public credit, of prosecuting the war while war is necessary with advantage, and of securing a speedy and honourable issue to the contest. Were the House therefore to be driven to a decision upon the subject, I should state this as my clear opinion ; but by deferring that decision till they have the means of information more fully before them, the influence of my opinion, I firmly believe, will be superseded by their own conviction, and on that account I am happy that the hon. gentleman does not mean to press it to ultimate decision to-night. The more the subject is discussed, the fewer doubts will be left upon the minds of gentlemen of the propriety of the measure, and the more the circumstances of the case are investigated and analysed, the more will the opinion of its policy and utility be confirmed. As an opportunity for this discussion will hereafter occur, I do not think it necessary now to enter much at length upon the different topics connected with it. I shall, therefore, only say a few words on each of them. And in the first place let us try its merits as a measure of œconomy. And here I must remind the House
that

that the honourable gentleman, by his own confession, does not bring forward the proposition as an indirect mode of forcing government to conclude a peace by disarming the country. The question therefore is, whether, as a mode of carrying on the war, the advantage which is likely to arise to this country from the co-operation of the Emperor, secured by her pecuniary aid, is an equivalent for the temporary inconvenience which the public may sustain in consequence of sending these remittances? To estimate the advantages with the inconveniences is very difficult. But in the outset I must set right an assumption of the hon. gentleman respecting the difference of this country granting or withholding pecuniary assistance from her ally. The difference (which of itself is no small one) is not merely whether we are to carry on an offensive or defensive war. This is one consideration, but it is not the only one. The honourable gentleman may talk in as high terms as he will of French enthusiasm and French gallantry, but he cannot deny, at least he cannot in justice deny, an equal tribute of applause to Austrian valour and Austrian heroism. If we review the campaigns of the war, it is impossible to find in history instances of greater prowess in the soldier or more accomplished talents in the general, or of more true magnanimity in the sovereign, than what they have exhibited. But the resources of his Imperial Majesty are in such a situation, that with all his zeal to persevere in the contest, and all his honour in keeping his engagements with his allies, he cannot put the full force of his dominions in action without pecuniary assistance. Will any man then tell me that if we cut off all hope of this assistance, he may not be able to persevere in his exertions? Will any man tell me that if there were no military diversions created upon the Rhine or in the Tyrol, on the north or on the south of France, that her numerous armies would not be employed in menacing our territory, and perhaps in invading our coasts? Or will any man tell me that if we withhold pecuniary assistance from the Emperor, that refusal may not lead to a separate peace between Germany and France? The difference then is, not carrying on a defensive instead of an offensive war, but it is carrying on a war solely on your part, without any assistance to aid your efforts, or any diversion to divide the force of the enemy, instead of carrying on the war as at present, in conjunction with an ally whose exertions are able to resist the whole

whole military power of France, while your fleets are occupied in protecting your trade and extending your foreign dominions. And do not the advantages which we enjoy, as they may be estimated from this short and simple statement, infinitely more than counterbalance any temporary inconvenience that we may sustain from the mode in which they are procured? The honourable gentleman took occasion to introduce the subject of a report from a Secret Committee, of which he is a member, but which is not yet before the House. I should wish, therefore, that the House will wait till the report is produced, and not repose implicit confidence in any of the sentiments made by the honourable gentleman. I do not know whether the peace establishment came under the enquiry or calculation of that Committee. I rather think that it could not immediately come under their investigation. But whether it did or not I am happy to assure the House that no such result, nor nothing approaching to it, will be found to arise out of a fair examination of the circumstances of the country. But I find I am discussing the question on grounds on which I ought not to object to it. Upon the train of argument which I was before pursuing, it is easy to shew that if we do not intend to lay down our arms, if we mean to continue any method of exertion, if it be our wish to be in a situation to persevere in hostilities, if hostilities are necessary from the overbearing pride and unjust pretensions of the enemy, it cannot be a measure of œconomy to abandon the plan of availing ourselves, of the co-operation of his Imperial Majesty by contributing money to his assistance. When we consider the amount of the expence, and the magnitude of the service, there is no ground of comparison between them! Upon what grounds does the honourable gentleman assume that the measure will lead to any difference of expence at all? He may consider the war as unjust, as it was unnecessary, and as ill conducted in its process as it was groundlessly undertaken; he may, if he pleases, think that the French were right in every thing in which this country thought them wrong, but he does not contend that we should this day throw down our arms and make unconditional submission to the enemy. Overlooking then the consideration of additional security, and its effect arising from the co-operation upon the spirit, the trade, the manufactures, and the population of the country; overlooking, I say, these considerations (and surely when I put them aside none will suppose that I view them as trifling or unimportant)

portant) let him calculate the additional direct expence which it requires to protect our coasts from a vigilant and enterprising foe who would have nothing to do but to molest his only remaining enemy. Reduce the public expences as much as you can, and let the inevitable burthens of the war be alleviated as much as possible by well judged œconomy in the different branches of the public service, but be not so weak or so treacherous to yourselves as to blot out one part of an estimate under pretence of œconomy, while you create another service which must be provided for at a much larger expence, and which would tend to aggravate the evil which it is your intention to curc. The honourable gentleman does not recommend his motion, or rather he does not ground his opposition to the measure hereafter to be proposed upon the tendency of this opposition to accelerate the restoration of peace. This, however, is an object which on no political question ought to be set out of view, and therefore I shall say a few words upon the subject in this point of light. Of those who wish for peace, there are two classes. There are some, and of these a very numerous body, who are desirous for peace, as soon as peace can be obtained on safe and honourable terms. To such it must be clear that the object of their wishes cannot be secured by laying aside the means of action. But there are others, and the honourable gentleman may be one, who are of opinion that for the attainment of peace, there are no terms which we ought not to accept, no law to which we ought not to submit. Even those who entertain these humiliating ideas would be guilty of insanity were they to add to their degradation by laying aside one of the weapons to which they have to trust for the acquisition of their darling object. Such conduct would betray a desire not only to take any terms which the enemy might be pleased to dictate, but to take every means to render these terms as bad as possible. It is evident then, that the measure in agitation, affects the question of peace, both as it depends upon the period of its restoration, and the terms on which it may be concluded. Did the reasonings upon the subject leave any doubt as to the fact, the conduct of the enemy through the whole course of the war particularly, would put the matter beyond all question. Having said so much upon the topics of œconomy, and the return of peace, I proceed to advert to it as a means of restoring public credit: Now, what does the honourable gentleman here assume? He assumes, that the great operating cause of the present embarrassments has been foreign
foreign

foreign remittances, and upon this assumption, he objects to any further advances being made to the Emperor. In this view of the subject, I shall beg leave to throw out a few suggestions, which will lead not only to a conclusion different from his, but to a conclusion directly opposite. I shall not now enter upon that part of the subject which is personal to myself. The honourable gentleman has had the goodness to give me intimation that he has some serious charges to prefer against me. Of course, I shall probably have opportunities enough in future of explaining my own conduct with the decision of the House, upon which I shall most willingly abide, whatever that decision may be. As this is not the subject of discussion on this night, perhaps it is improper in me to say any thing upon it. I would only beg leave to observe, that the printed papers, upon which the honourable gentleman commented, contain the written representations of the Bank, and, it is added, my answers. These answers, however, were not given in writing, and what is there printed under this title, is merely minutes of what passed between me and the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank, reported for the perusal of the Bank Directors, without having been previously submitted to my examination; nor did I so much as see them till just before they were printed. The hon. gentleman argues that advances to the Emperor were calculated to produce ruinous consequences, that ruinous consequences did ensue, therefore that the advances made to the Emperor were productive of ruinous consequences. This is very short logic: but if he will not believe it to be false upon my authority, if it is not too much to ask, let him compare it with information. In order to make his conclusion good, he must shew that the remittances made to the Emperor actually did diminish the cash in the Bank, and that the issue of the Order in Council was occasioned by the diminution produced by these remittances. If it should appear that these advances did not occasion any diminution of cash at the time that they were made; on the contrary, that the balance of cash rather increased, and that the mischief so much and so justly lamented, arose from the operation of causes widely different, then in justice as well as prudence, the House ought not to ascribe an evil to a cause different from that in which it originated. The hon. gent. preferred another charge against me, which I heard without much dismay—that I had persisted in sending money to the Emperor when I was aware that the Bank, from the line of conduct I was pursuing, was approach-

to a state of insolvency. This again, he takes for granted without any information upon the subject. If it should turn out that, during the whole period that these remittances were made, so far was I from being aware of the approaching difficulties of the bank by the successful operation of commerce, the balance of exchange for all that time was in favour of this country, inasmuch that, if these circumstances had continued, the state bank would at this day have been growing better, the honourable gentleman will surely not persist in the accusation, when he finds that the ground on which it was preferred, is wholly and completely fallacious. The premises the honourable gentleman may wish to be taken on trust; but to this I object, not wishing to supercede his position by any assertion of my own, but merely because the House are not in possession of materials from which they can infer whether it be true or false. When these materials are before them, perhaps it may be found that the mischief arose from remittances of cash which were sent to Ireland to a greater extent than usual, and to local alarms in this country, which caused a great run upon the bank for some time before the Order in Council was issued. This is all the answer which I think I need give the honourable gentleman's charge of misrepresentation.

I have only a word more to say respecting an expression in the speech from the throne at the opening of the present session. In that speech his Majesty was advised to state that the resources of the country were equal to every exertion, an expression founded certainly not upon a knowledge of the balance of cash or bullion at that time in the bank, but upon the survey of the general state of trade and manufactures of the kingdom. Our trade and manufactures certainly depend in a considerable degree upon the stability of public credit, which is interwoven with the independence of the country. To preserve that independence, then, is necessary above all things to the restoration of public credit; and, next to the preservation of this independence, is the prevention of the danger of a future run upon the bank. And here we may look at the question in two points of view. Let us first look at the best way to procure the greatest quantity of cash; and, if the subject is fairly viewed, I do not despair of convincing the House that the remittance of a sum to the Emperor, instead of obstructing and impeding the influx of cash into the kingdom, will accelerate and increase it. I will grant that, if collateral circumstances did not vary, the
balance

balance in our favour would be diminished precisely in proportion to the sum sent abroad. But will it be contended, that abandoning an ally would have no effect upon the markets of Europe, and that such a step, were it taken by this country, would not influence any of the avenues of her commerce? Such a position is so absurd and untenable, that it would be an insult on the good sense of the House to spend their time in combating it. But a profitable trade depends not only on the state of the purchaser to receive, but of the seller to send. And need I ask what effect it would have upon the zeal, the spirit, the industry, and consequently the trade and manufactures of the country? Were our coasts to be incessantly threatened by the whole concentrated force of France, which would be the case were the Emperor obliged, in consequence of our refusing to aid him with money, to conclude a separate peace with our common enemy? When the subject, therefore, is viewed in this light, who is so short sighted as not to see that the inconvenience which may arise from present exertion would be much more than counterbalanced by the pressure of subsequent events? If the argument be admitted in one case, there is no possible case to which it may not be applied. In short, it may be argued upon the same grounds that as soon as you experience the difficulties arising from a drain of cash, you must give up all your foreign connections, and upon this principle you ought to withdraw your protection from all your possessions in the East and West Indies. Of these possessions, for instance, it might be said, "True, they have been accounted extremely valuable, they have yielded great profits, the produce of them has formed a great article of commerce, and been the cause of a vast influx of wealth into the country, but in time of war they put us to an expence; we will save therefore in future the expence of protection." But how? By sacrificing all the present and future advantages which might flow from the possession of them. Precisely the same argument will apply to an ally. But if the reasoning is just in the view of procuring an influx of cash from abroad, how much stronger is it in the view of promoting circulation at home, which is fully as necessary for the restoration of the credit of the bank as the other. If our foreign commerce would be affected by the abandonment of an ally, how much more would our internal situation be affected by the pressure which would naturally result from an enemy encreasing in strength in a direct ratio to our inability

ability to resist his efforts. Would not the natural consequence be a new alarm, accompanied with a disposition to hoard? And thus the immediate cause of the mischief would be renewed. I trust that though there might be some cause for the late alarm, that it is now almost gone by, and I am convinced, that the more the state of the country is enquired into, the less ground there is for despondency, or the apprehension of any danger which Englishmen may not boldly meet with the fortitude which belongs to the national character. While our object is however to remove alarm, and to restore the public credit, is it wise or prudent to court a greater alarm? Can it be expected that the effects of the greater would be less serious than of the slighter alarm, or that even the same effects would not do much more harm? Those, then, who look to the restoration of public credit in the bank of England as their favourite object, should be the last persons to counteract a measure which has an obvious tendency to produce that event to which their wishes and their endeavours tend: and how the honourable gentleman can claim the benefit of the argument drawn from his subject, I have yet to learn, nor can I even guess. There is still another topic left upon which I feel myself impelled to say a few words, namely, the additional security that would be given to credit by the restoration of peace. Whether the best mode of obtaining peace is to run the risk of losing the aid of the Emperor is a question upon which there exists but little doubt. We have seen long ago that the uniform object of the enemy's policy has been to disunite us from our ally. This design has manifested itself in the course of several negotiations and discussions, and we have seen a similar policy too successfully practised with other powers who were formerly leagued with us against France, and who have been seduced, some into a neutrality, others into open hostility against us. She has publicly and repeatedly declared her wish to make a separate peace with Austria, that she might be enabled to dictate terms to us, or to carry on the war against this country with greater effect. It is but very lately that we have heard that France has, a short time ago, made distinct overtures of peace to the Emperor to the exclusion of this country, and that he, with his accustomed honour and good faith, instead of accepting of them, communicated them to the court of St James's, and renewed his declaration to the enemy, that he would not conclude a peace except in conjunction with great Britain,

tain, justly persuaded that no peace can be concluded on a permanent foundation but one founded upon a due regard to the individual claims, and the common interests of the different powers of Europe. Putting apart, therefore, the obligations of gratitude and honour, it must be obvious to every one whose views are not confined within the narrowest and most contracted limits, that the best mode of attaining the desirable object of peace is to persevere in making a common cause with the Emperor, and aiding him with those means which his own dominions do not furnish, but with which the resources of this country enable us to supply him. It is for this House to determine whether they will give success to the intrigues of the enemy, which has hitherto been frustrated by the fidelity and magnanimity of our ally, or whether they will persevere in those measures which are most likely to bring the contest to a safe and honourable issue? To their judgment and their spirit I leave the decision, convinced that they will act in a manner becoming the representatives of a great and powerful nation. On these grounds I think there is no use in countenancing the present measure, and as it does not commit the House to give any opinion upon the subject, I shall give it my negative.

Mr. Fox said, I have listened to the speech of my honourable friend with all the attention I am capable of, and there is not a single statement which he has made, nor a single argument he has advanced, to which I do not most cordially agree; and so far from the motion being inconsistent and contradictory, as the right honourable gentleman has asserted, it appears to me to be the natural result of the views and principles on which it was founded. My honourable friend has made out a strong *prima facie* case against sending any more money to the Emperor, but he has not upon this ground alone desired the House to adopt any definitive resolution. He has moved for a Committee to take a more accurate survey of the subject, and to examine whether any farther information can be obtained to remove the impression which the first view is calculated to produce. It already appears from the documents before the House, that the right honourable gentleman has broken the promise which he made to the bank Directors, and that he persevered in remitting money to the Emperor in spite of their earnest remonstrances, and their repeated representations of the ruin with which it would be attended. When I find that

that the opinion of the Bank Directors was so decided as to the danger of sending money out of the country at that period, I am ready to refuse my assent to a continuance of the system now. But the right honourable Gentleman says, that perhaps the Bank Directors may be of a different opinion now as to the effects of such a measure, and that their prediction as to its consequences was contradicted, although the event which they anticipated has ultimately taken place from other causes. But the very purpose of the enquiry now proposed, is to ascertain what are the sentiments of the Bank Directors, and to obtain from their evidence at the bar their opinion of the effects which, in the present state of the country, any farther advances to the Emperor are likely to produce.

The right honourable Gentleman urged one objection to the motion of my honourable friend, which, had it come from a person of inferior abilities and authority, I should have considered as an idle quibble. The right honourable Gentleman says, that the purpose of the motion is either meant to bring the House to a decision to-night, or if it admitted farther delay, it could not affect the object of applying a styptic to the wound, of which the body was bleeding to death. But though my honourable friend does not mean to hurry the House into the Committee to-night, three days need not elapse before the House might be able to come to a decision upon such information as would be sufficient to form their judgment. The right honourable Gentleman, however, opposes the forms of the House, and says, that the subject will be better discussed in a Committee of Supply. But is not time of material consideration when public credit and confidence depend upon the result? Is it not of importance that the country should know, as soon as possible, that no more money is to be sent abroad? If the decision is connected with the recovery of public credit, and the restoration of the Bank to its former situation, the speed with which the determination is adopted, is an argument of the greatest weight. If the discussion is postponed, as the right honourable Gentleman desires, the circumstances in which the House will afterwards have to decide may be materially changed. His Majesty may enter into conditional engagements for the payment of sums, and though we know that the House is not bound by such engagements, will any man tell me that the circumstances would be the same, and that the House would be as free to decide when his Majesty called upon them to enable him to fulfil his engagement as before it was contracted? But what security is there that, before the opportunity arrives for the House to decide in the manner proposed

posed by the right honourable Gentleman, advances may not actually be made, and money be sent abroad to the Emperor? Last year the right honourable Gentleman remitted to the Emperor a million and a half without the knowledge or consent of Parliament; and what security have we that he will not again make a merit of acting in the same manner, and come to Parliament for an indemnity? Whatever other Ministers might have pleaded against such a supposition, the right honourable Gentleman cannot remove the suspicion, as he has established the precedent by what he has already done, and under the slight censure which was passed upon his conduct, may avail himself of the pretence of necessity to adopt a similar measure? Will the House, then, upon the prospect of a full discussion upon a future occasion, trust that the Minister will not anticipate that discussion which they are afterwards to pronounce?

The right honourable Gentleman then went more particularly into the substance of the case. He said, truly, that all the House had to do, was to weigh maturely, and to chuse between the different advantages and disadvantages which every view of the subject presents; to balance the evils of sending more money abroad, in the present circumstances of the country, with the ill consequences which would arise from a refusal of further pecuniary aid to the Emperor. On an occasion so momentous as the present, I am not to be imposed upon by words; and because I look at the magnitude of the danger against which we are immediately to guard, principally almost, I am not to be told that I take a narrow view of the subject. It is not the quantum of the advance which forms the material subject of consideration. A million and a half, under the present circumstances of the country, might be attended with much more ruinous consequences than ten times the sum in different times would produce. What, however, would be the consequences of a refusal? The right honourable Gentleman says, that it is not merely the difference of an offensive or defensive war; the consequences, he says, would be more important. But, admitting the utmost extent of the advantages which we could reap from the exertions of the Emperor, they must be compared with the certain evils by which they must be purchased. In my opinion the recovery of Lombardy, and even the re-conquest of Belgium, would be no equivalent for the ruin with which public credit would be overwhelmed, and for the daily breach of faith which you would be obliged to commit against the public creditor. Has the right honourable Gentleman forgotten the language which he so vauntingly employed in the last Parliament, during the first years of the

war? Does he remember how often he told us, that the brilliant victories and the extensive territories which crowned the arms of the French Republic were more than compensated by the ruin of their public credit, and by the financial sacrifices by which they were purchased? We then contended, that with regard to France such reasoning was ill-founded. With regard to this country, however, it must be conclusive. Is France so limited in population, so defective in internal resource, so dependent upon commerce and manufactures, for the sources of power and of prosperity, that the least shock to her credit endangers the fabric of her wealth and her greatness? Is England, on the other hand, so fertile in territory, so abundant in internal resource, so abundant in population, so little dependent upon the adventitious advantages of commerce, that the ruin of her credit will less sensibly enfeeble her power, and the disorder of her finances less affect the basis of her prosperity? The advantageous situation in which, from various circumstances, the right honourable Gentleman has been placed, have spoiled the character of his mind. From the implicit confidence he has obtained, and the support he has experienced, he imagines that he can advance positions which he may maintain or reject according as his purpose requires, and that the country will follow all his changes, and listen to him with equal conviction. He has now, however, brought the country to that situation when he must no longer expect to be heard with the same indulgence.

The right honourable Gentleman says, that the Emperor may conclude a separate peace, if he no longer receives pecuniary aid from this country. Here I cannot help making a most bitter complaint against Ministers. Is it true that the Emperor would be justified in making a separate peace, if he was no longer to be supported by supplies of money from this country? Was this a part of the treaty with the Emperor of Germany? Was it understood that he was only to continue the contest so long as his armies were paid by British money? Why did not Ministers explain to the public the terms on which the co-operation of the Emperor was to be obtained? Why did they represent him as an independent ally, who was to support his own cause, and defray his own expence? Last Parliament, when the Prussian subsidy was under consideration, I was rebuked by the right honourable Gentleman, because I said that there was no end to the system of subsidies; that Spain, that the Emperor, might likewise demand to be subsidized, or refuse to continue the contest. This idea was received with the utmost displeasure by the right honourable Gentle-

Gentleman: Spain and Prussia, however, made separate peace; and now we are told that the Emperor of Germany must abandon the contest, unless he is to be supported. Had Ministers come fairly forward, and avowed that such was the condition of the treaty with the Emperor of Germany, compliant as the last Parliament was, I am convinced they would have hesitated. Certain I am that it would never have been sanctioned by the country. At the beginning of the war Ministers told us, with triumph, that the contest was not to be carried on, as on former occasions, at the expence of this country, but that we were to have the general concurrence of the powers of Europe without subsidies. Now, however, we find that the common cause is to be maintained at the expence of Great Britain. The right honourable Gentleman says, that the French have shewn that they wish to disunite us from our allies, and to conclude a separate peace with the Emperor; but in the policy which they employ the French Directory may have indirect as well as direct objects in view. If they conceive that the contest is a contest of finance, and with more reason, than belonged to the right honourable Gentleman's speculations, they may esteem a victory over the Bank of England, and over the public credit of this country, as of much greater importance than a brilliant victory on the Scheld, the Rhine, or the Po. They may tempt the Emperor of Germany with offers of peace, to give force to his demands of pecuniary aid from this country, and to support that system which must terminate in the total destruction of our finances, and the irretrievable ruin of our public credit. The right honourable Gentleman argues, too, that without the diversion which the Emperor of Germany affords, the troops of the enemy would be employed upon the frontiers nearer to our coasts. Here the state of Ireland must occur to give additional weight to the danger of an attempt of invasion. No man can entertain a worse opinion of the state of that country than I do. No man can attach to Ministers a more severe responsibility for the measures which have led to that fatal situation than I do. No man can be more fully convinced than I am, that the safety of Ireland, on the late attempt, was owing not to the prudence of Ministers, but to the favour of the elements. But was it from any want of land forces that the attempt of the enemy was frustrated? No, surely. Though they had had 100,000 men instead of 20,000, could they have been more successful? Can we say, then, that it was from a want of land forces that the attempt against Ireland was not carried into effect? But it may be said, that their command of larger

bodies of troops might facilitate their view upon Great Britain. I have no difficulty to say, that there is little reason to apprehend that such an attempt will take place. I do not deny, however, that it might occasion considerable alarm. But will the sending of money to the Emperor diminish that alarm, or guard against its consequences? Measures to repel invasion have already been taken, and have occasioned harrassing laws, and intolerable hardships to the poor. Nor do I believe that it would be thought necessary to go beyond the scale of preparation which Ministers have thought proper to employ. But when the right honourable Gentleman spoke so much of the diversions which the Emperor was to make, and the advantages with which they would be attended; I expected that the old principles would have been maintained. In former wars I admit the advantage of these diversions; but the general ground on which they were deemed useful was to prevent the French, by expensive diversions, from bestowing that care on their marine, which would be dangerous to this country. I will readily acknowledge, that I should be very sorry that such an increase should take place in the French marine as to render them dangerous to this country; but I am fully convinced, that though the war were to last two years more (a period to which no man can look for the continuance of the war) the French would not be able to cope with the fleets of this country in the European seas. I will not deny; I will even admit, for the sake of argument, that some disadvantages might arise from the want of this diversion. But then look at the other side. The question is, however, whether the credit and the confidence of the country would suffer most from the Emperor making a separate peace, or from sending money out of the country, contrary to the opinion of the Bank, and with their sentiments of the mischiefs with which it has already been attended? But how then is the credit, the confidence, of the public to be restored? The right honourable Gentleman says, by the influx of money from the balance of exchange. For my own part, however, I am persuaded that confidence is more required than specie. The right honourable Gentleman asked if the House would agree to abandon Europe to its fate? An expression, indeed, so general, that the meaning of the right honourable Gentleman is not very clear. But if the credit of the country is to be restored by the balance of trade, and by every thing connected with its commercial prosperity, will the right honourable Gentleman contend that the Continent at peace is less likely to consume and to pay for our commodities than when distracted by the miseries of war? Which of
the

the plans proposed then is most likely to effect the restoration of credit? The right honourable gentleman rests his expectations entirely upon theory. We appeal to experience for the proof of the mischief which the measure has already produced. The Bank Directors predicted the event which we have seen realized.

But the right honourable gentleman says, that though the prediction of the Bank was fulfilled, it was not justified, and that the proportion of cash in the Bank continued the same after the advances had been made to the Emperor, from which so much mischief had been anticipated. But without being particularly acquainted with the state of the cash in the Bank at this period, I am fully convinced from the nature of the case that the cash must have diminished. The argument of the honourable gentleman proved too much. He surely does not mean to say that if the exchange continued favourable to this country it would not have been favourable in a much higher degree if no such advances had been made. But this balance of exchange, however, had not been sufficient to save the Bank, and they must be sanguine indeed who expect that the mischief of the measure will be remedied by this supply, or that it will be adequate to the necessity of the case and to the restoration of public credit. I confess I read with astonishment the statements which Ministers have introduced into his Majesty's speech at the opening of the present Parliament. I will not go into the details of the particulars it enumerates, but I would desire any man to read the accounts of the situation of the manufactures in Yorkshire, in Manchester, in Devonshire, and judge whether the language of the speech describes the true state of the country, and they must have great faith who can subscribe to the assertion against the evidence of facts. I must complain also of the monstrous falsehood which Ministers have introduced into this speech. At the moment when the strongest representations were made by the Bank of the danger of the system they pursued, and of the critical situation in which public credit stood, the speech talks of "the temporary embarrassments which had been felt," and in such a manner as to infer that they had now ceased. At a moment when so much government paper was floating in the market, and the discounts at which it sold were so enormous, does the Minister think proper to insult the public with such an assertion in the speech from the throne. But I think I can discover upon what ground the Minister advances

vances this assertion, and the manner in which he intended it to be understood. The temporary embarrassments he had felt had arisen from the refusal of the Bank to co-operate with his views; and when he represents them as having ceased, I understand him to allude to the accommodation which he obtained upon promises which he never intended to keep. The right honourable gentleman cautions the House that the minutes which my honourable friend quoted were drawn up by the Directors of the Bank, without even having been submitted to his inspection. Had the right hon. gentleman been impeached at the bar of the other House, and arraigned as a criminal, he might, no doubt, have availed himself of this legal objection to their evidence. But can it be supposed that the Directors of the Bank were men of such dull understandings, that they were unable to comprehend the answer of the right honourable gentleman to their representations? Was it that the honourable gentleman had so little command of the English language that he could not explain himself so as to be understood, or did he only employ that power of language with which he was graced for the purposes of deceit? Where men are little accustomed to communication they may find it difficult to gather each others meaning, but between the Directors of the Bank and the right honourable gentleman, the communications were sufficiently frequent to create a facility of understanding. Indeed when I hear the honourable gentleman begin to defend himself by objections of this kind, I consider it as a bad omen of the candour which he may be expected to employ in the discussion. Whether is public credit and confidence then most likely to be regained by the measure which the right honourable gentleman proposes, or that which we recommend? The right honourable gentleman says that commerce would suffer by the alarm of invasion, because it would withdraw from labour those who are now usefully employed. This evil, however, had already been incurred by the measures which have been adopted for the defence of the country. The stoppage of the Bank was not the effect of the alarm of invasion, but the run upon it was occasioned by a want of confidence in the pecuniary security of the country. Every part of government service, the army, the navy, was in arrear, and the embarrassments struck an alarm into the people. If any thing can infuse a doubt of the solidity of the Bank, or prevent the restoration of its credit, it will be the obstinate perseverance of Ministers in the system which has
already

already been attended with such fatal consequences, and the negligence of the House in continuing patiently to acquiesce and blindly to confide. Such a perseverance I would dread more than any attempt of invasion, or even a landing effected by the enemy. I cannot upon the present occasion admit it to be a narrow view of the subject to consider the restoration of credit as the grand point to which our exertions ought to be directed, almost to the exclusion of every other. The situation of this country is different from that of France. The credit of France was but a small part of its general resource; but here it is the life and soul of our power and prosperity. It is not so much the quantum of the advance, or the saving in point of œconomy that is to be considered, but it is the effect which sending any sums of money abroad is likely to produce when connected with the situation of the country, and the opinion which the Bank have expressed of its consequences; but in the view of peace it is of the first importance to labour for the restoration of public credit. The French look more to the state of the Bank of England and to public credit than to the event of a battle, and whatever tends to protract or to endanger the cure, will raise their hopes and encrease their pretensions. I do not wish to recur to the commencement of the war; but it must be remembered that the evil of war was admitted, but it was deemed a less evil than the remote evils we had to dread from the Scheld, Holland and Savoy, continuing in the power of the French. Four years have we suffered the immediate evils of war in a degree unparalleled, and now we are farther than ever from the security against the remote dangers which were dreaded. Take care then, least you expose yourselves to all the evils of the remedy, without being able to effect a cure. But it is said, would you throw away one of your weapons when you may still be obliged to continue the contest? Yes, I would answer, throw away one weapon, if you will then be able to wield the remainder for a longer period. I would rather contend with less now to be able to contend more effectually afterwards. If the war is not terminated by the present campaign, and if 30 or 40 millions are required for the public service, I would ask the honourable gentleman, whether the difficulty of borrowing would not be more severely felt, and the impotence of the country affect its interests more deeply? I would have the efforts of the country less now, that they may be more lasting.

The

That we should fall unarmed before the enemy, is far more likely to ensue from unlimited prodigality than from a cautious husbanding of our strength and resources. I know that general principles are against that contracted scale which I recommend, but there are occasions when general principles are not applicable, and when to deviate from them is to act with true wisdom and sound policy. The right honourable Gentleman talks of peace, but does he take any means for its attainment? Will he, or can he take those steps by which that blessing may be recovered? The country is convinced that he neither can nor will, and far from expecting the restoration of credit from the blessings of peace, we must think of supporting credit in such a manner as to be able to go on for the period to which the war may be protracted. Every year may convince us that, year after year worse terms of peace may be expected, than would have been expected the preceding. It is now a war of finance, and every year we must be in a worse condition. In the course of the last year, stocks have fallen 27 per cent. and it is to be feared that they will continue to fall. It is not to the stoppage of the Bank, nor to the alarm of invasion, but to the general state of credit and resources that this is to be ascribed. If this year a loan can with difficulty be negotiated with the stocks at 49, how must the difficulty be increased, if it is found necessary to have another next year, when circumstances must be expected to be more disadvantageous? If I cannot succeed with the right honourable Gentleman to put a stop to the career he is now running, let me implore the House to interpose between the madness of the Minister and the ruin of the Government. The credit of the country can only be recovered by the House examining into the real situation of the nation, and taking its affairs into its own hands. The House should resolve in the present embarrassments of the country, to send no more money abroad, and if the war is to be prosecuted, reserve that strength and resource which will support those exertions which we may be obliged to prolong.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that were he disposed to reply at any great length to the right honourable Gentleman's (Mr. Pitt's) speech, the attempt on his part had been rendered perfectly useless by the able and complete answer of his right honourable friend. He therefore only rose in order to solicit some explanation on points where he imagined he was somewhat unfairly dealt with by the right honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt:)

Pitt.) He unquestionably understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given him a pledge that he would make the object of the present motion a separate and distinct question, and that he would himself bring it forward before a Committee of supply, and give it, as far as depended on him, a fair, full, and satisfactory discussion. But without the most distant insinuation of any thing uncivil and impolite might he not be permitted to ask, what security the right honourable Gentleman was prepared to give, that he would bring forward the discussion he had thus so solemnly promised? Did not the right honourable Gentleman promise the Governor and Directors of the Bank, that no farther loan should be made for the Emperor? Did he keep that promise? No! And now that he makes a promise to the House with the same emphasis and solemnity, what assurance have the House that this promise shall be more faithfully adhered to? The language which such a conduct might justify, it was not his wish to adopt; he was not prepared to assert that the right honourable Gentleman would not keep his word; he would only venture to say, that it was very possible he might change his mind; and if so, what penalty is he to incur? He has bound himself not to make any further advances to the Emperor, without previously communicating such intention to the House. But has he not done so already? and what was the censure passed by the House on that unconstitutional transaction? Did not the House resolve, that it should not be drawn into a precedent; and that nothing could have justified it but the urgency of the case, by which he was justified in that instance? But may not the right honourable Gentleman hold out again a similar pressure, and on the plea of the special necessity of the case, come again for an indemnity to the House? He is now, as he says, willing and ready to discuss the propriety of farther advances—Was he so last year, when, of his own accord, he clandestinely sent money abroad without condescending to solicit the opinion or consent of Parliament? The great stress of the right honourable Gentleman's arguments inclined to shew, that we wished to compel the Emperor to a separate peace, and the dangers that would arise from the loss of his co-operation. The right honourable Gentleman had also accused him of not being over fond of speaking very respectfully of persons in the Emperor's situation. Mr. Sheridan confessed, that he never felt inclined to lavish panegyric on crowned heads. Unfortunately for

themselves, and for their subjects, they had but too many flatterers, and he was not ambitious to add to the number.

But if any thing disrespectful to the Emperor had been dropt on the present occasion, it most assuredly fell from the right honourable Gentleman; it was he that libelled the Emperor! it was he that said, that unless we continued our subsidies his Imperial Majesty would withdraw his co-operation; it was he, therefore, who stigmatised that generous, that faithful ally, by supposing him to be a mere mercenary, pensioned monarch, like any of the petty princes of Germany. This was an aspersion never thrown on the Emperor's conduct by him (Mr. Sheridan), or those who generally voted and acted with him.

But what now might be the amount of the meditated loan for his Imperial Majesty? Was it one, two, three, five, or ten millions? Last year there was remitted to him one million and a half. And are we now to say, that unless we give a million and a half to the Emperor, he will immediately make a separate peace? Surely so paltry a consideration could never induce him to relinquish a contest that was undertaken for the support of religion, of justice, of the maintenance, nay the very existence, of social order! He would surely rather make some sacrifice for his subjects; endeavour to inspire them with that enthusiasm which animated the French; and seek some other resources more answerable to his situation. But if we are to grant him but a small sum, that small sum will be of little service; and if a large sum, then the largeness of the sum, and the expectation of more, might operate as a temptation for the continuance of the war. It was not from the interference of the Archduke Charles, or of Buonaparte, that we were to expect the termination of hostilities. The Archduke might be eager to repair, or at least to maintain, the military character of Austria; nor might it be unalluring to him to contest the laurel of victory with a great and distinguished rival in martial fame. Let this be as it may; sure he was, that, as long as England would pay, Germany would not refuse to fight. Then where were our hopes of peace? Mr. Sheridan then compared the relative loss sustained by England and Germany during the course of the war, and he wished that this comparison might be held up by an honest Minister of this country to an honest agent on the part of the Emperor. That comparison would shew, that if the one had served us by a powerful Continental diversion, the other had purchased that service by the loss of her national credit. Indeed, if we entered into
that

that calamitous calculation, it would not appear that his Imperial Majesty lost more men than we did.

But, on the contrary, that our losses were equal; that it was ducat for ducat, brave for brave, widow for widow. If that friendly expostulation were made to the Emperor, he must have confessed that we have already contributed our full share of calamity. When to this we might add, that we have to contend against the combined fleets of Spain, Holland, and France, it would be also just for that agent to come to this conclusion, that Austria had rendered, comparatively, but little, and we the greatest service to the cause. Nor would he like to see our Ministers break faith with the public creditor. He would be but little inclined to trust or continue any alliance with those who were not faithful to their engagements with their own subjects; for it was reasonable to expect that we should be just at home, before we could do justice to others. But to all these considerations the right honourable Gentleman did not think proper to advert. He ran from subject to subject, and dilated one vast variety of matter foreign to the question; promising us, however, a terrible fine speech on a future occasion, in which he would doubtless be equally variegated and equally inclined to lead us agreeably astray in a blossomed wilderness of rhetoric. But on that promise could the House rely? Might not the right honourable Gentleman be again in this instance equally disposed to change his mind?

Sir *W. Pulteney* said, he still was for making advances to the Emperor, but he thought the restoration of credit the first object. He said that a small sum would do a great deal with the Emperor, because there was none of that lavish expenditure, profusion, and irregularity of payment, which prevailed here. The Emperor, he said, could not go on without assistance, because he had no means of borrowing, nor was it usual. The Emperor's expences for two years of the war had only exceeded his revenue one million. The schemes of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he said, had produced no effect in lowering the discounts on Government paper. He blamed the extravagance and want of œconomy in our expence, but he was against laying aside any weapon which could enable us to contend with advantage in the prosecution of the war.

Lord *G. Cavendish* said, that he would be no enemy to subsidies, were the country in a situation to afford them. But the prodigality of Ministers had reduced it to such distress, that, without a thorough knowledge of all the circumstances that related to our financial situation, we should risk an addi-

tional aggravation of that distress by a new drain of money from the country.

The House then divided :

<i>Noes</i>	—	266
<i>Ayes</i>	—	87
	<i>Majority</i>	179

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, *April 5.*

The Bills upon the table went through their several stages.

Lord *Auckland* gave notice, that on Friday next he would make a motion upon the standing order (No. 26.) of the House.

Their Lordships were summoned for that day.

The *Lord Chancellor* was upon the woollack for the first time since his illness.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *April 5.*

The Bill for the better regulating the size of bread in the city of London was ordered to be read a second time on Friday.

ARMY EXTRAORDINARIES.

The House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to consider of the Army Extraordinaries.

The *Secretary at War* moved a resolution, "That it is the opinion of the Committee, that a sum not exceeding 3,280,513*l.* 13*s.* 2*d.* be granted, for the purpose of defraying the Extraordinaries of the Army, from the 6th of December 1795 to the 6th of December 1796, voted and not provided for by Parliament."

General *Tarleton* said, that the prominent articles of the account were the sums sent abroad to the Emperor, and the money expended in the island of St. Domingo. The advances made by this country to the Emperor, appeared, from a review of the war, not to have placed the Emperor in a better situation than before they were given; and though the island of St. Domingo had cost so much money, and the lives of 14,000 gallant men to this country, there was not a single post
in

in our possession that would not be taken by three hundred fresh troops.

General *Walpole* said, that there were three West India regiments, to which, he understood, there was not a single man belonging, and which were merely nominal.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* said, these sums were not for any particular regiments; and with respect to those mentioned by the honourable General, there had been an idea of raising such regiments, because, being composed of Blacks, they would have been better able to endure the fatigues of the climate in the West Indies. But it was afterwards found that the recruiting of them was not so practicable as had been imagined. There was, however, an establishment now on foot for raising corps of a similar kind, which would soon supersede the necessity of sending any more European troops to that country.

The resolution was then carried, the House resumed, and the report ordered to be received the next day.

BANK INDEMNITY BILL.

The order of the day for the third reading of the Bank Bill being moved,

Mr. *Bastard* said, that this Bill appeared to him much more formidable with the clauses it contained, than when originally brought forward. He had not seen any thing to prove the necessity of paying the national creditor in Bank notes. No effective measure had yet been taken to remedy our situation. What had hitherto been done was nothing but patching. In former times of difficulty and danger, it had been the practice of the House to look to the Constitution, considering that the interest of commerce would follow of course. Now, however, the monied interest had got the better of every thing, and to their temporary accommodation every measure was directed. He thought the powers given to the Bank might prove a dangerous engine, if the Bank should join with the Government. The public revenue would now depend upon the discretion of the Bank, and upon the value of Bank notes. He did not imagine that the Bank would employ their powers to oppress the people's liberties, or endanger the throne, but he did not like the precedent of conferring powers, which, if acted upon, must be of very fatal consequence.

The Bill was then read a third time.

Mr. *W. Bird* presented a clause, by way of rider: that in all cases where Bank notes might be tendered in payment for rent, it should not be lawful for the person to whom the rent was due,

due, if he refused such tender, to seek a remedy by way of distress.

The clause was brought up, and read a first and second time.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* did not think the clause necessary, as it was not likely that distress would be enforced, if the person could pay in Bank notes.

Mr. *Jolliffe* was of opinion, that the clause made too great a difference between landholders and other creditors; and thought that, if such a regulation were at all to be adopted, it should be made general.

Mr. *Fox* thought that there was fully as much necessity for this as for the regulation in case of arrests; because, if he was not mistaken, there was no bail admitted in cases of distress and sale of goods.

The *Solicitor General* said, that this clause appeared to him to go beyond the former clause. In cases of distress, there was the remedy of replevin, and if this clause was at all to be adopted, it ought to be with the amendment that Bank notes to the amount of the rent should be deposited with the sheriff, with the person's own bond, instead of the two securities which were now required in the action of replevin. He conceived the clause to be unnecessary, however, because, if the person in danger of being distressed actually possessed Bank notes, and had property to the amount of the rent, he could easily find sureties.

Mr. *Allardice* was against the clause, because it went to make Bank notes still farther a legal tender, which he thought impolitic.

Mr. *Manning* said, that he had forbore to say any thing upon the Bill, as he was afraid that he might be understood to speak the sentiments of the Directors of the Bank. He begged to be understood, however, as giving his own individual opinion. He was against the clause, though he thought it more necessary for individuals than the clauses which had been introduced. With regard to the Bank and individual bankers, he was sorry that such clauses had been passed, as he did not think they were necessary. He was convinced that the associations which had been entered into would sufficiently answer the object; all that was wanting was, only to confirm the Order of Council, and to restrain the Bank from issuing specie for a certain time.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* said, that if the sense of the House was against the clause he should not press it to a division. He thought that the poor were deprived of a remedy in this case,
which

which the rich had obtained by the regulation with regard to arrests.

Sir *W. Pulteney* said that the clause would do no harm. The remedy of replevin was very expensive, and the inferior practitioners of the law might greatly harass the poor by enforcing the rigour of the law.

The clause was negatived without a division.

Sir *William Pulteney* said, that the clause he had to propose would ascertain the fact which at present was doubtful, whether the Order of Council had taken place in consequence of the application of the Bank, or was merely a measure of government? If the Bank went and stated their situation to government, he considered it as equivalent to an application. If the Bank really desired this measure, he thought that their charter was forfeited. It was not his wish to deprive them of their charter, but he wished to deprive them of their monopoly, which he thought prejudicial to the public, and even to themselves. The object of the clause was to require the Bank within a certain short period after the passing of the act to come forward and to declare whether they wished the restriction to continue. If they did not, the prohibition should immediately cease.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, he felt it to be his duty to oppose this clause, which was contradictory to the whole of the grounds on which the bill was formed. A legislative enactment to ascertain a fact which was the object of the clause, was the oddest idea which he had ever heard. The measure of the worthy baronet was fairly avowed, and it was no less than to deprive the Bank of its charter. The opinion of the House in different stages of the bill had been that public credit was to be restored in the person of the Bank, and he was convinced that they would feel it neither honourable nor politic to support the views which the worthy baronet professed, and the measure to which the clause tended.

Sir *Wm. Pulteney* replied.

Mr. *Fox* supported the clause on the ground that it would ascertain whether the stoppage of the Bank was a measure taken upon the exercise of the best judgment of the Directors of that corporation, or whether it was dictated solely by government.

* Mr. *Secretary Dundas* objected to the clause being brought up, because it tended to repeal a provision in the bill fixing the period of the duration of the act; and because, though the

the object of the clause might be a good one, the mode of obtaining it, by making the Bank their own executioners, was bad. He contended also that the Bank, not having petitioned against the bill, implied, that the Directors approved of it.

Mr. *Sheridan* was of opinion that the clause should be brought up, though he could not give his assent to its being made a part of the bill in its present form.

The House divided on the question that the clause be brought up.

Noes,	—	—	—	79
Ayes,	—	—	—	43
<i>Majority.</i>				36

The other orders of the day being disposed of, the House adjourned till the next day.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, April 6.

Received from the Commons a great number of private bills, which were read a first time.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, April 6.

The Irish Loan Security bill was read a second time.

Mr. *St. John* gave notice, that on an early day after the Easter recess he would make a motion respecting that part of St. Domingo which is now in our possession.

Colonel *Walpole* moved, "That there be laid before the House a monthly return of the several black corps ordered to be raised in the West-Indies from the date of their establishment down to the 25th of December, 1786."—Ordered.

Colonel *Walpole* wished to know whether it was the intention of his Majesty's Ministers to remove the Maroon negroes who had been transported from Jamaica to the southern parts of Canada to a more temperate climate? If it was not their intention he should submit a motion on the subject to the House on a future day.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas* replied, that it was not the intention of his Majesty's Ministers to take any such step. He believed that the situation of the Maroon negroes was as comfortable

fortable as it could be made, and he had letters from General Wentworth to that effect, which he had no objections to lay before the House.

Mr. *Bryan Edwards* confirmed what Mr. *Dundas* had stated, and added, that the sum of 20,000*l.* had been raised among the planters in the island of Jamaica, towards carrying away, and settling the Maroons in Nova Scotia. He had a letter then in his hands from Governor Wentworth, to a gentleman in the city, in which it was stated, that the Maroons then in Nova Scotia were comfortably settled; that they were orderly, quiet, and content; and that there was every reason to hope they would in time become an useful and happy people. A plan had been formed for instructing them in Christianity, and educating their children. These latter, from miserable and sickly creatures, had become healthy, and every thing was provided for them. Upon the whole, the Maroons would be infinitely benefitted by their removal to Nova Scotia. In order then that the public might not form an idea that these men were suffered to perish in cold and inhospitable climates, he would move that copies of all letters received from Governor Wentworth concerning the Maroons, that had been sent from Jamaica to Nova Scotia, be laid before the House.—Ordered.

Colonel *Walpole* gave notice that, on Thursday next, he would make a motion upon the subject.

The report of the extraordinaries of the army was brought up, and the resolutions were read and agreed to by the House.

SLAVE TRADE.

Mr. *Charles Ellis* rose in pursuance of the notice which he had given to make a motion respecting the situation of the negroes in the West-Indies. Some gentlemen he said might, perhaps, imagine that it was his intention to move for a modification of the bill which had been brought in for the abolition of the Slave Trade. The motion, however, which he should have the honour to propose, went upon grounds directly opposite to those on which the bill proceeded. He reprobated the principle of the Slave Trade as much as any man could do, but in cases where extensive and important interests were involved, the attention of the legislature should not be confined to principles alone. Where an evil was of long existence and interwoven with a system upon which depended a great mass of property belonging to individuals,

however much the evil might be deplored and the principle of it detested, the claims of the persons interested in its abolition were not to be forgotten. Thinking, therefore, as he did, that the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade would be attended with ruin to the colonies, he had turned his attention to another plan by which the evil complained of might be gradually lessened, till in the course of time it might be completely extinguished without producing any of those calamitous consequences which might ensue from the adoption of measures more instant and less deliberate. It might perhaps be said that he was too strongly prejudiced by interest to form any candid and impartial notions upon the subject. If he was prejudiced, the prejudices were common to him, with almost every West Indian, and from their universality they were at least entitled to investigation. With respect to the bill which had been brought into Parliament, he conceived that it would be ineffectual for the purpose for which it was framed, for even though it was passed, and the Slave Trade prohibited, the traffic would not cease, it would only be diverted into an unlawful channel. A right honourable gentleman (Mr. Burke), whose opinions were always entitled to every degree of respect, had devoted his attention to the subject. And what was the result of his investigation? He, who was by no means insensible to the weight of the arguments against an unlawful trade, preferred a system of gradual regulation to a measure of immediate abolition. It was evident that wherever there were strong temptations to break a prohibitory law, it would be difficult to enforce the observance of that law. In the present case there certainly would be the strongest temptations of interest to violate the prohibition, supposing it to be imposed, and even though it were to be enforced by rigorous penal laws, it certainly would be evaded. He did not question the physical strength of the legislature to enforce the obedience of any law which in its wisdom it might think proper to enact, but he spoke in reference to the mild character of the English legislature in all its penal statutes. The plan which he had in view proposed to accomplish the same end by different, and in his opinion much more effectual means, by means which would neither be difficult nor dangerous in the execution. From the civilization of the negroes in Africa, perhaps little advantage could be expected. The object, however, was laudable, and as such the measures which had been taken for its accomplishment were certainly

tainly deserving encouragement. From the civilization, however, of the negroes in the West-Indies, he was much more sanguine in his expectations, and this, in his opinion, might be made to go hand in hand with the improvement of the population. At present there was a great failure of population in all the West-India islands, proceeding partly from the system of morals which obtained among the negroes, partly from the diseases to which they were subject, and for which no remedy had been found, and partly, as some supposed (though he was by no means of such an opinion) from excessive labour, and the want of proper food. With respect to the improvement of their morals, which certainly was the most essential point, the regulation of the measures proper for that purpose, together with their execution, it belonged to the different colonial legislatures to frame and superintend. He should, therefore, merely state a few of the grounds on which the suggestion was thrown out. The present lax state of morals among the negroes arose from no defect in their natural disposition, but from the prejudices which they had imbibed when young, and the religion they professed, which was a corrupt heathenism, or mahometanism, and which gave them extremely incorrect ideas, particularly of marriage. A remedy for this evil was not to be expected from measures of compulsion, but by the gradual and gentle means of instruction and improvement. Perhaps, for instance, Sunday-schools might be instituted with good effect, at which they might learn the truer principles of religion, and more correct notions of morality. When he spoke of instruction, however, he did not wish to be thought to mean that it would be proper to enlighten them with any other species of knowledge than that which was merely requisite for the improvement of their morals. For the purpose of communicating this instruction it would be of the highest importance to get persons qualified for so confidential a charge, since from the influence they would naturally have over the minds of the negroes, were they to avail themselves of it in an improper manner, they might produce the greatest mischief in the colonies. He suggested also, that encouragements should be held out to the young negroes to marry at an early age; that distinctions ought to be established, to which the most deserving ought to be promoted; that marks of degradation ought to be inflicted upon those whose misconduct rendered them proper objects of punish-

ment, and that the greatest care and attention should be paid to children in their infancy.

The second cause of the failure of population, he conceived, to be the diseases to which the negroes were subject. The gradual improvement of morals would certainly operate as a lenitive to this evil, and medical ingenuity might in time discover remedies for the different distempers, which were now unknown. The other causes to which some were pleased to ascribe the want of population, he did not admit to exist; and this refusal proceeded from immediate sources of information to which he had access, and was founded upon the testimony of others, to whom he thought credit was due. Every proprietor was obliged to keep a certain portion of ground in cultivation, according to the number of slaves he had in his possession; and as a proof of that, where there was industry among the negroes, there was also profit; he referred to the facts of the markets of Jamaica being supplied with the produce of the ground allotted to them by their masters. The assembly of Jamaica had already taken up their cause, and passed what was called the Consolidated Act, which was framed with a due regard to the rights and happiness of that class of men. If it was said, that though they were entitled to justice from the courts of protection by law, yet that they did not actually obtain it, he should answer, it was fair to presume that the same spirit which had instituted these courts, would guide their administration. One thing, which the colonial legislature had not done, and for the best of all reasons, because it was not in their power, he considered as absolutely requisite to the improvement of the negroes, namely, the repeal of the credit laws. But he had received an assurance from his honourable friend (Mr. Pitt) that this obstacle should not be permitted to stand in the way of an event so desirable, upon the grounds of humanity, and so beneficial in the views of interest. Mr. Ellis next adverted to the charge of cruelty which had been brought against the West-India planters, which he endeavoured to refute, by an attempt to shew that it was not their interest.—Having thus sketched out his plan, he stated two objections which might be started against it; first, that he had fixed no period for its completion; and secondly, that the quantity of uncultivated land in the West-India islands would protract the period of the abolition of the Slave-trade: to the former he replied, that he had not fixed any period, because it was impossible, and the latter he obviated

obviated by remarking that the remedy was in the hands of the British legislature; only, if they restricted the cultivation of the islands, it would be but fair to indemnify the proprietors for the loss they would thereby sustain. He concluded with moving,

“That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, to request his Majesty that he may be graciously pleased to give directions, to the different Governors of the West-India islands to recommend to their respective councils to take the proper steps for encreasing the population, so as thereby to diminish the necessity of importing negroes from Africa, and ultimately to lead to the total abolition of the Slave trade; likewise to adopt measures for promoting the moral and religious improvement of the negroes in the West-Indies, and for securing to them their rights by a proper administration of justice; and to assure them that this House will be ready to co-operate with them in accomplishing these desirable ends.”

Mr. *Barham* seconded the motion. He said, he was happy that he was at length enabled to give his concurrence to a measure which, as stated with great candour and ability by his honourable friend, would ultimately tend to the abolition of the Slave trade. He declared, he had never opposed the object of the motions made at different times to the same end, but only been adverse to the means proposed for carrying it into execution. And he was authorized in stating, that these means were of so ineffectual a nature, that they could never have obtained their aim, even though they were to have been sanctioned by the concurrence of every branch of the legislature; for it could be clearly proved, that the slave contraband trade could not be prevented by the united efforts of the whole navy of England, and the assistance of all the Custom house officers employed in the country. The very nature of the slave trade opposed the efficacy of the abolition which had been so frequently pressed upon the House, for a cargo of slaves might be landed in as many hours as it would take weeks to land merchandise in general.

Mr. *Wilberforce* said, that if he thought the motion before the House would really be productive of the good which the Gentlemen, who supported it, expected it to produce, he should be ready to give it his assent, for no consideration of consistency of conduct should induce him to oppose a measure that was likely to produce so much good; but as he sincerely thought that in passing such a measure as this, the House would do away its own solemn pledge, and also do much evil, it was his duty to oppose the motion, and even to deprecate the passing it. He reminded the House of what was likely to be thought of it out of doors if it agreed to a measure

measure that was so repugnant to its own proceedings. He then referred to what passed in the House of Commons, in the year 1792, by which it was resolved that within four years from that time the African slave trade should be totally abolished. He maintained, that the measure now proposed was much weaker for the purpose of abolishing the trade than what had been assented to in the House on the part of the planters themselves. He then referred to the resolutions moved by Mr. Secretary Dundas, and adopted by the House for the gradual abolition of the trade, and by which it was determined that the slave trade should be abolished in a given time. By the first resolutions of the House the trade was to have been abolished in January, 1796, which was sixteen months ago. By the subsequent ones it was to be abolished in the year 1800. Here he read the substance of the latter resolutions, as also an address of the House to his Majesty, to use his endeavours with foreign nations to pursue the plan adopted by the House; from which he argued that the present measure was infinitely less than that which the House had already adopted, and that the House had made greater progress already in the abolition of the African slave trade, than this motion was calculated to produce. As the plea of justice and humanity had been so often urged upon this subject, and urged in vain, he was afraid it was hopeless. It was idle to say that population among the negroes could not be kept up in the islands, for the contrary had been proved, and yet a greater number had already been imported than were intended to have been allowed by the last resolutions, up to the period at which the trade was meant to be abolished. He then entered into a detail of the average of the losses in some of the islands upon the question of population among the negroes, for the whole of a century, in order to shew that the population may be kept up without any importation. He reminded the House of the many causes that were adverted to on former occasions, as causes that would operate to encrease the population of the negroes, and the willingness that was expressed on the part of the friends of the trade to try the effect of these causes, only that they should allow a little time for that purpose, and time was granted to satisfy the minds, or rather to compliment the prejudices of the planters. He observed that when the last resolutions of the House for the gradual abolition passed, he was congratulated on the approaching attainment of the object of his wishes. He said then

then he could not accept of that congratulation, for that he foresaw that the friends of the trade had succeeded in reducing the point to a question of practical and temporary expedience, by having the trade continued. He thought they would go on with the trade from time to time without diminution, and experience had verified what he said upon that subject. He maintained that the humanity of the planters, which had been so much boasted of, had slept ever since the resolutions passed for abolishing the trade gradually; and said he was afraid nothing could rouse it but an act of Parliament to abolish the trade totally. He enumerated the horrors of the trade, and concluded upon that head with alledging that it caused general devastation upon a third part of the habitable globe, and that, although Gentlemen who made it a question of trade merely might speak of it with coolness, yet it was a shame to the House of Commons to listen to any proposition for experiments upon that which they had declared to be inconsistent with justice and humanity, and which they had also declared ought to be abolished at a given period. He maintained that, from the present plan, it was impossible to see that the Slave trade would ever be put an end to. The legislature of Jamaica had not looked upon this trade as an evil, on the contrary, they had declared, since the passing of the resolutions of the House of Commons, that it should not be put an end to, and therefore, on the willingness of the colonial assemblies to co-operate with the wishes of the British Parliament to put an end to the slave trade, by gradual means, or by any means, he entertained his doubts, notwithstanding the handsome things that were said of the humanity and justice of these assemblies. But it was said the trade was British, and not the trade of the planters. It was a trade in which the planters and their agents had the profit, and the British Parliament the guilt; and yet that Parliament was, by this motion, to ask these planters whether the trade should be put an end to or not? He maintained that as there were at this time three fifths of the island of Jamaica uncultivated, the remainder of it was intended to be cultivated by negroes to be imported notwithstanding it had been solemnly declared in the House that no further cultivation, by such means, should ever be attempted. He maintained, that however well disposed the legislature of the Colonies might be to put an end to the importation of negroes, yet the thing would be impracticable, under the provisions that were proposed by the
the

the motion now before the House, and that no justice could ever be enforced on the part of the negroes, unless those who were guilty of the injustice should chuse to accuse themselves; and he thought it an extraordinary thing to propose now, that an experiment should be tried by the colonies, after they had had four years allowed them already to try experiments, and after the House had declared that the trade should be abolished.

He maintained, that the idea of ameliorating the conditions of negroes in the colonies and plantations, while the practice of importation from Africa was continued, was founded upon a dangerous error. All attempts to better the condition of those who are already in the plantations, by instruction, &c. would be in vain, while the practice of importation from Africa continued; because as men were improved in their understandings, they must naturally have some freedom. It would be idle to think of giving freedom to the newly imported Africans, and it would be impossible to reconcile freedom and slavery together. If, therefore, there was any serious wish to ameliorate the condition of the negroes in the West India islands and plantations, the only way to accomplish that object was to put an end to the foreign traffic. This he maintained not only to be just and wise upon general principles, but to be also necessary for the safety of the West India islands. And he might ask the House what they thought would have been the effect, if that very measure had been put in force four years ago, since which 150,000 slaves had been imported? He reminded the House, that the principles of policy, as well as justice, are incompatible with slavery; and that, by persisting in this practice of importation, they might arrive at a period, when rivers of blood might be made to flow. He would therefore say to those who only looked to their property in the West Indies, "Abolish the importation of slaves at this moment, as the first step towards the salvation of those islands." Natural causes must produce natural effects; and there was no reason for this or any other country hoping that Providence would protect it from the consequences of injustice. The laws of nature would have their effect in the moral as well as the physical world; and there required no profound reflection in order to see what must be the event of persisting in a system of injustice. Besides, he was entitled to insist that the House of Commons was precluded from entertaining any motion of this kind. It could not entertain it, if it was faithful to itself; for it had said, that the slave trade should be abolished in January 1796; that period had elapsed. It had entered into other resolutions for the abolition

abolition of the trade, and now he thought that no further experiments to continue the trade should be tried.

The last resolutions of the House were moved by his right honourable friend (Mr. Secretary Dundas): he wished to know from him, if he supported this motion, what he would think of himself; not what the public would think of him, but what he would think of himself, if he did not adhere to the principle of such resolutions, with which the present motion was entirely at variance?

Mr. *Bryan Edwards* said, he should support the present motion, because it not only tended to the interest of humanity, but also tended to give the planters the rank they merited; it tended to vindicate their much injured character; for he maintained that this country had both the profit and the guilt that belonged to the slave trade. He said that the trade did not originate with the planters; that in the year 1500 British men of war went to Africa to purchase slaves for the Spaniards; that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth the ships Solomon and Jesus were employed in that traffic. He knew the nature of the slave trade that was carried on in Africa; it was a trade, for which the West India planters were not to blame; it was a trade carried on by British capital, in British ships by British subjects, and under the sanction of the British Government. He was aware he might be told that, if it was a British trade of this nature, a British Parliament might abolish it. He did not question the right of the British Parliament to abolish it, it was the practicability of the exercise of that right which he doubted; and that he considered as an answer to the observations of the honourable Gentleman who spoke last. If that abolition was impracticable, it was in vain to preach to the humanity of that House. He maintained that the abolition of the slave trade, without the consent and co-operation of the colonies, was absolutely impracticable; for while the Africans were disposed to sell the trade would be carried on. That was his first proposition. The second was, that if the planters were properly treated, they would agree to any practicable measure that humanity could wish for the abolition of the slave trade. He would prove the affirmative of these propositions, or he would admit that all he said should pass for nothing. In support of the first, he said that Spain, Portugal, and America, followed the slave traffic as much as we did; that they would continue it, although we should abolish it; and that their trade in that respect would encrease in exact proportion as ours should diminish: the consequence would be, that although slaves should not be imported under British colours,

yet they would be imported under other colours, as much as they ever have been. They would not, indeed, import them immediately into our islands, but they had islands of their own into which they would import them, and from thence they would be carried to ours' with the greatest facility. This the British Parliament would not be able to prevent, until they could change the wind, and give law to the ocean. There were not only these physical obstacles, but there were also moral obstacles, that rendered the abolition of the slave trade by the British Parliament absolutely impossible. He illustrated these positions by references to various facts as applicable to the West India trade in general. He vindicated the character of the planters from the foul aspersions which, he said, had been cast upon them in this country, by men who knew too little of the matter to legislate for the colonies. He recited many acts of the Colonial Assembly, by which, he contended, it was manifest that they wished to ameliorate the condition of the negroes in the West Indies, but which were unfavourably received in this country by the Board to which those proceedings were referred. He read extracts from the last act of Parliament that had been proposed for the abolition of the slave trade, and contended that it was a model of absurdity. He assured the House, from his knowledge of the members of the legislature for the colonies, that he had no doubt, if the plan now before the House should be agreed to, the Colonial Assembly would themselves put an end to the importation of negroes from the coast of Africa. He then entered historically into the condition of the islands, the nature of the trade, of the treatment of the negroes, the laws of the islands, comparing them with some of our own, to remind the House that we should look to the necessity of the latter as well as the former, before we pronounced that crimes were frequently committed, because there were laws inflicting penalties for the perpetration of them. These laws, to which he referred as now in force in England, or not repealed, were the first of Edward the VIth, which provided, that if a person should be proved to have walked the streets for three days idly, he shall be adjudged a slave, and shall be taken up and disposed of as such. If he shall escape, and be guilty of the same offence a second time, he shall be branded on each cheek; if a third time, he shall suffer death.

The other statute was, that which gave power to an overseer of the poor to take up any person whom he should deem to be in want, &c. and subjecting such person to arbitrary discipline, and, in cases of refusal or remissness to comply with such

such discipline, to punishment. This he did to shew, that we should look at our own laws before we criticised on the laws of the colonies. Having dwelt on these and various other topics for a considerable time, he concluded with giving his hearty assent to the motion before the House.

Mr. *Wilberforce* explained.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it would not be necessary for him to take up the attention of the House at length, as the topics had been so often discussed, and every Gentleman had had an opportunity to acquire a knowledge of the fundamental principles of the subject. He therefore rather took it for granted, that the principles were self-evident, than that they required to be proved. But he had the satisfaction to know that the principles had been recognized by Parliament, and entered on its journals, thereby serving them as landmarks to guide them in their course; and he had the additional satisfaction to know, that those principles called for the complete suppression of the trade. He had the further advantage of unanimity in the House upon that necessity, because there was no person but what professed a concurrence in that opinion, though some differed about the mode of carrying the object into execution, each party contending that his mode was best. It was evident, therefore, that the slave trade ought never to have begun, and ought now to cease. The only question was, at what time it ought to cease? Towards that determination the present motion appeared to have been brought forward; but here it was much to be lamented there was not a total, immediate, partial, definite, or even gradual, abolition offered: but, on the contrary, Parliament was invited to acknowledge, collaterally, that it would be contented to endure the continuation of the traffic without knowing for how long it was sanctioning such a measure. The motion did not even prevent creating a new trade. Formerly a certain interval was required for the planter to prepare himself against the events of the abolition; but now, he was not told that the planter was better prepared than then; and if he were not, there had been a large importation for 4, 5, or 6 years, which had done nothing, or the interval had been delusive; or if the planter had availed himself of the interval, and provided a large stock by importation, perhaps it had had a contrary tendency to the end proposed by Parliament, which tendency would not be guarded against by the present proposal. On the contrary, a regulation was proposed without any definition. He wished to consider, therefore, how far in the present circumstances any thing new was proposed to induce the House

to adopt the present motion as a substitute for abolition. The first thing stated in support of it was, that it enforced provisions for encreasing population in the islands, and would eventually thereby encrease the labour and cultivation of them. Now, many years ago, it was proved that the population of negroes in the islands was sufficient for their labour and their cultivation except in the new settlements; and consequently, unless the planters formed new settlements, the population must by this time, or, at furthest, will be speedily and wholly effectual. It would be impossible to carry internal regulations into effect while the importation continued, and so far the motion would be nugatory; and, as a friend to regulation ought to be the friend of abolition, he thought, instead of an evasive substitute like this, a total abolition should be quickly made. Upon a general view, he did not discover much novelty in the discussion. One honourable Gentleman, indeed, (Mr. Bryan Edwards) had contended, that, notwithstanding a total abolition should be decreed by Great Britain, a contraband trade would still subsist in the colonies, and urged that as an argument against it. But the same sort of argument would apply to the revenue, because smuggling cannot be totally suppressed; which was a mode of reasoning never yet adopted. He observed nothing in the motion towards freeing this country from the guilt, or Africa from the horror. The honourable Gentleman had pointed out some of the statutes of the colonies, which had not been alluded to in the course of the present debate as bad ones, and compared them with reproachable statutes which still remained a dead letter upon our statute book. But to what did this tend, except to shew that there was not enough done in either case, and that more, for the security of the happiness of the people in both countries, ought to be speedily effected. The abolition, therefore, should take place, because the abolition did not go to abolish a bad law which remained a dead letter on a statute book, but it went to abolish a cruel and abominable practice, for the representation of which every reproachful epithet was inadequate.

There were two topics he had to notice. One was, the information the House had received, that instructions had been sent out from this country to the governors of the colonies abroad not to suffer an abolition. In regard to which he had only to observe, that since it was by our laws the traffic was instituted, and by our ships and under our protection it was carried on, it was by ourselves, and ourselves only, it should be suppressed. The other point was partly new, growing from the war; he meant the present situation of the islands, whereby

whereby it was said the minds of the negroes had been lately familiarized to new scenes of horror. He heard this with a hope that the planters were desirous to stop the contagion, and the inference which he drew was, not that the planter might endeavour to diminish the distresses of the slaves, in order to render them more faithful and obedient, but that he should totally abolish the trade, in order to avoid the accumulation of force, and the occurrence of such events as he might for ever have reason to deplore. Upon these grounds he decidedly objected to the motion, because he considered it to be only a substitute for an abolition, which in his opinion, was consistent only with the honour of this country, or the safety of the islands.

Lord *Hawkebury* declared the motion was in perfect unison with his opinion; and if the House would recollect, they would find that he always was for the abolition; but not for fixing a determined period. His feelings were to consider it as a question of practice, and to do all the good he practically could. Every evil which had been long in growing up, ought to be gradually abolished; and by attempting sudden reformatations, greater evils would be likely to arise.

Mr. *W. Smith* said that, if he voted for the motion, he was not to be precluded from supporting the measure of a total abolition whenever it was brought forward. Mr. Smith thought there was a confusion in the noble Lord's ideas respecting political and moral evil, and by not attending to this distinction, his argument failed to apply.

Sir *Wm. Young* spoke in answer to Mr. *Smith*.

Lord *Carysfort* spoke against the Slave Trade and the motion, and expressed his desire for a total abolition.

Mr. *Secretary Dundas*, in answer to his honourable friend, thought he would act badly if he did not countenance the motion. Without the consent of the Colonial Assemblies, he considered any attempt at abolition to be idle and nugatory. He found himself brought into a satisfactory predicament by the motion, inasmuch as it afforded him an opportunity to agree to a final abolition through the medium of a prudent and preliminary regulation. He conceived the legislature of this country might restrain a ship from sailing to the coast of Africa for slaves or elsewhere; from Liverpool, because Liverpool was a part of the country belonging to that legislature; but he did not think the legislature of Great-Britain could exercise that authority at Jamaica, without making a breach

breach in the colonial connexion. Jamaica had often applied in former times for a regulation of the Slave Trade to this country and had been refused, and therefore if this country now was wiser and deemed an abolition necessary, it ought to allow that the colonies might be wiser also, and more able to judge of the propriety of such a measure. The motion appeared to him to be a wise and salutary regulation, and as such it received his hearty approbation.

Mr. *Dudley Ryder* said that his honourable friend, in the resolutions he moved in the year 1792, had been of opinion that this country could not only prevent the colonies from carrying on the trade, but prevent ships of other powers from approaching within a certain distance of the islands. Mr. Ryder quoted the resolutions to prove this assertion. He was for an immediate and total abolition. He moved an amendment to the motion, to leave out the words, "gradually to diminish and ultimately to abolish," because this was insinuating that this proposition was to be a substitute for the other, and therefore he could not agree to it. He added, that there were other words which he wished to be left out, but even in this state he could not vote for the motion.

Mr. *Hawkins Browne* seconded the amendment.

Mr. *Sewel* supported the motion.

Mr. *Fox* declared his decided disapprobation of the motion, as he considered it to be an indirect attempt to perpetuate the Slave Trade. The support given to the motion by Mr. Dundas was a sufficient proof to him of its object, as that gentleman had always opposed the abolition. He hoped the present Parliament would not be like the last, which on this subject had exposed itself to the contempt of the country. In 1791 it had voted against the abolition. In 1792, awed as it ought to be by the petitions of the people, it had voted for the abolition; but it never had fulfilled its resolution. It was said that France would carry on this trade if we dropped it. He thought otherwise; but whether they did or not, that was no argument to this country. If they do, it will indeed be confirming the epithets of murderers, plunderers, &c. that have been used with regard to the French by the majority of the House, for it is a trade of rapine, murder, and dishonesty. It had been said that the slaves were mostly those condemned for crimes in their own country; but were not those crimes chiefly such as witchcraft, which no man in that House regarded as a crime, since they disbelieved in it? He did not like to trust to the colonial assemblies, and he wished that the
House

House of Commons would not neglect their duty, though the colonial assemblies did. Let the laws be made abolishing the Slave Trade, and there was no doubt they would be obeyed. Let them be enforced as those respecting the importation of tobacco into this country, and there was no doubt they would be effectual. He did not think the House was to be bound by former resolutions in favour of the trade. If the House resolved to sell themselves to the devil, they should alter such resolutions.

Mr. *Windham* spoke in favour of the motion, as it was calculated to abolish the Slave Trade, by such proper regulations as had formerly been recommended by his friend Mr. *Burke*.

The amendment being negatived without a division, the original motion was put,

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	—	—	69
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	—	—	63
					36
<i>Majority.</i>					36

Mr. *Pollen* put off his motion on Peace from the next day, till Monday, at the request of Mr. *Pitt*.

Adjourned at half past one o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, *April 7.*

The Bishop of *Chester* was sworn, and took his seat.

STANDING ORDERS.

This business, related simply to a private bill now pending before the House.

The order of the day being read, for summoning their Lordships,

Lord *Auckland* rose, and moved, that the Standing Order of the House, No. 126, he read; which, being done accordingly, by the clerk, it appeared to relate to certain regulations necessary to be made with respect to estate bills, in order to entitle them to the concurrence of the House; and, his Lordship contended, that the said order militated against certain provisions of the bill in question, which was *Salter's* estate bill.

The Lord Chancellor quitted the woolfack; and, after taking a cursory view of the bill, avowed his opinion, that the provisions

656 WOODFALL'S PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS. [COMMONS,
provisions in question did not militate against the Standing
Order.

The bill was then read a second time, and ordered to the
consideration of a Committee.

Adjourned till Monday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, April 7.

Mr. *Best* presented some farther communications between
the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Bank, which were
ordered to lie on the table.

The bill for regulating the assize of bread in the City of
London, was read a second time,

The consideration of the Malmesbury election petition was
put off till Thursday, the 4th of May.

The orders for the attendance of several gentlemen on
Monday next (they not having been present at the call of the
House), were discharged.

CORN EXPORTATION.

The order of the day for the third reading of the Corn
bill, being read,

Mr. *Ryder* said, that in consequence of some observations
which had fallen from a worthy baronet, when this subject
was last discussed, on the impropriety of granting a bounty
upon the exportation of grain, under the present circum-
stances, he had thought it right to bring forward a clause to
that effect. Parliament, during the existence of the scarcity,
had thought proper to prevent exportation, and it might not
be prudent at once, not only to permit exportation, but to
encourage it. The clause he had to propose was, to pre-
vent any bounty being granted until the 5th of February
next, by which time the state of the ensuing harvest would
be known. The clause was brought up and read a first time.

A short conversation then ensued.

Mr. *Allardyce* opposed the motion.

Mr. *Whitbread* observed, that the hon. gentleman had cal-
culated from the low price of barley in Norfolk, where it
was only 14s. a quarter, but, in other counties it was at 19s.
and in London at 28s. Every gentleman must feel that the
average price of corn should be kept as low as possible; for
if the price of one kind of grain rose, that of all others would
rise also. Wheat had risen in price already, since the present
bill

bill began to be debated in that House. He would therefore support the clause.

Mr. *Wilberforce* was in favour of the clause.

After a few words from Mr. *Brandling*, and from Mr. *Whitbread*, who said he would move to leave barley out of the bill altogether, the clause was adopted.

Mr. *Whitbread* for the reasons he had formerly stated, moved, that the word "barley" should be omitted.

Mr. *Yorke* was against the motion, because the general interest of the country, not the interest of any particular class, was to be consulted.

Mr. *Hussey* thought that it was improper to allow the exportation so early after the late scarcity.

Mr. *Whitbread* contended, that the brewing business had lately been a losing business. He wished as much as any man to promote the improvement of agriculture, and to encrease the quantity of grain raised. The interest of brewers and of the country was the same in this respect, but he thought the measure premature.

Sir *Wm. Pulteney* was for the original clause.

Mr. *Coke* contended that barley should not be excepted.

Mr. *Fox* said, that if barley was not comprehended in the bill, the bill would be good for nothing at all, and upon that ground he should oppose the amendment. But he thought it would be better, in consequence of the contrariety of opinions concerning it, that the further consideration of the bill be put off for a few weeks longer, as there seemed to be no pressure which required it to be passed immediately. He denied that there was any such thing as a distinct interest between the farming and mercantile part of the country.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, there was no other question to be determined at the present moment, concerning the subject before the House, but whether the permanent and established system that had hitherto been acted upon with respect to the corn laws, should be then adopted? Whether that system was the best or not, could form no part of the discussion on that day; because the formation of a new system must be a work of considerable time and great deliberation. He should think, therefore, that, in the first instance, the House ought to return to the old permanent system; but at the same time he did not conceive such a measure so urgent, that a delay of a few weeks could be a matter of any consequence either to the public or the parties interested in the bill; and as there appeared to be such a variety of opinions,

and so many doubts concerning many parts of it, he certainly thought it would be better to postpone, than to press the decision of it. He would therefore move, that the present debate be adjourned to that day six weeks.

Mr. *Whitbread* persisted in his amendment.

Sir *Wm. Pulteney* thought the delay improper, as, in contemplation of this bill, grain had been sown and land prepared throughout the country.

Mr. *York* was against the motion.

The House divided.

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	118
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	58
		<i>Majority</i>	60

So that the bill is put off.

BANK INDEMNITY BILL.

The order of the day for the further consideration of the Bank bill being read,

Mr. *Fox* rose to propose the clause he had formerly mentioned, which was to enable the Bank to pay in cash such part and proportions as they should think proper before the expiration of the act, upon their giving three days notice to the Speaker of the House of Commons of their intention, which intimation was to be published in the London Gazette, and stuck up at the Royal Exchange.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the clause, in its present shape, went to impose a severe hardship upon the Bank. He was inclined to amend the clause by adding, that such payments should be made only out of such cash as had come into the Bank since the 26th February, and at their disposal.

Mr. *Hobhouse* was against the clause, because he thought it might have the effect to delude the country. The finance Minister of the country had seized on the chest of the Bank; public credit had received so deep a wound that it would not soon recover. He thought there was no prospect of the Bank beginning to pay in cash before the expiration of the bill, if ever they could pay in cash again at all.

Mr. *Fox* said, that the object of the clause was to ascertain whether the Bank's refusing to pay in cash was the effect of the prohibition or of their own choice.—He did not wish to use any harsh phrase, but he thought there had been something like a juggle between Government and the Bank, on whom the responsibility should fall.

The

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, the clause would alter the whole object of the bill; he therefore moved an amendment that such payments should be from cash accumulated in the Bank since the 26th of February, and at their disposal.

The clause was brought up and read a first and second time.

Mr. *W. Smith* supported the clause.

Mr. *Huffey* disapproved of the clause, as it enabled the Bank to pay partially. He was for them paying fully in cash when they resumed their operations.

Mr. *Samuel Thornton* supported the amendment.

Mr. *Fox* replied; after which the House divided upon the amendment.

Ayes,	—	—	—	—	103
Noes,	—	—	—	—	31
Majority					72

Upon a question of the duration of the bill,

Sir *W. Pulteney* rose to propose an amendment to the clause, by shortening the duration of the period when the operation of the bill was to cease. He complained of the inordinate influence which the Bank had obtained over the Executive Government, the manufactures, and commercial part of the community. If it opposed itself to the measures of Government, its power was, in his opinion, so dangerous as to controul the laws, and to prevent the continuance of war, even in opposition to the sentiments of the nation; on the other hand, its power was dangerous if in the hands of the Executive Government, and could make advances from time to time injurious to the real interests of the country. Sir William said, that his ideas on the subject were not novel; he had entertained them for the last twenty-five years, and his judgment was now fully confirmed on this point, that the Government, agriculture, and commerce of the country, ought to be independent of the Bank of England. Sir *W. Pulteney* then entered into a history of the bank from its first formation in 1694, and the steps which had produced the present monopoly it enjoyed. He denied that this monopoly was in contemplation at its original erection, but stated that it had been afterwards extorted from Government, by assisting in the exigencies of the moment. Still it was granted upon this condition, that Government should be at liberty, when it thought fit, to

recall and destroy this monopoly. Sir William said, that it was his opinion the conduct of the Bank of England had, in various instances, been injurious to the state; and that the establishment of another Bank was not only desirable for the sake of the manufacturers, but also for the constitution of the country. He thought this a desirable measure with a view of extricating the country from its thralldom; and wished the present monopoly of the Bank to be got rid of at the shortest possible period. He was persuaded that if the Bank had no such monopoly, it would prosper more, and the proprietors of Bank stock would share larger dividends than at present. On this plan, he wished the continuance of the Bank as useful to the public, and that its Directors and officers might enjoy the same salaries as heretofore. The prosperity of the Bank of England, if merely a chartered company, and its dividends, would encrease more than when it existed as a monopoly. If a new Bank should be erected, he thought it should be a part of its institution, that it should have no power to apply to Government to shield itself from the demands of its creditors. Such an institution ought not to be considered as in opposition, or a rival to the present Bank, but rather as beneficial in its operations to the Bank itself, by preventing similar embarrassments and distresses to that which the country now experienced. In no former situation, not even in the last years of the American war, had the country ever been reduced to such a situation as at present. Did Government, he asked, ever make loans at terms lower than fifty? The establishment of another Bank, would, in his opinion, encrease the circulation of coin, and revive the credit and give a new spring to the commerce of the country, nor would it diminish the credit of the existing Bank of England, but rather serve to assist and support it. He thought it no good argument against the adoption of this plan, that the capitalists of the city would be afraid to enter into it, from the overgrown power and influence of the Bank of England; for he could not suppose that independent men would ever be subservient to the views of the old Bank. It was disgraceful to Ministers, to suffer Government to be at the mercy of a corporate company, and it is what they ought to have resisted sooner. He considered the present fall of stock to be greatly owing to the power which the Bank of England had to distress the Executive Government, and which might eventually compel it to conclude an ignominious peace. Sir William Pulteney concluded with moving

an

an amendment to the clause which limited the bill to the 24th of June, by leaving out that period, and substituting the 6th of May.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said this was not the proper time to discuss the question, whether, in order to the re-establishment of public credit, the Bank of England ought to be supported, or a new Bank formed. He considered, therefore a great part of the speech of the worthy Baronet as consisting of hints thrown out for future consideration, rather than as containing plans meant for serious adoption. The simple question at present was with regard to the period of limitation proposed in the bill; and in his idea, the period now proposed was too short to enable the Bank to resume its operations, and therefore he should not choose to fix an earlier period than that already stated in the bill, and which he thought not too long to give the Bank the power and opportunity of re-establishing its credit. He should therefore oppose any alteration of the original term, and resist the amendment offered by the honourable Baronet.

Mr. *Fox* acknowledged that the right honourable Gentleman was right in asserting, that this was not the proper period to discuss the plan suggested by the worthy Baronet, but so far agreed with the worthy Baronet, that if the Bank could not, before a short limited time, convert their paper into money, some plan ought to be adopted to bring cash again into circulation. He professed himself a friend, therefore, to the clause for shortening the duration of the bill, and promised to give it his support. He suspected it to be impossible for the Bank to be upon the same footing as formerly; but at all events, he thought it better to limit the restriction to the 6th of May, than the 24th of June, because, although it were to resume its former operations, according to the opinion of the right honourable Gentleman, the sooner it did resume them every party must allow it to be the better; and if as he conceived it would not resume those operations without recovering its former credit, it would be nearer that point by resuming them at a shorter than a longer period. But as this did not appear at all probable, the worthy Baronet then came with his plan, contending that if the Bank could not without a breach of faith resume its operations when there might be cash enough to defray its demands, it might be necessary to find others who can, in which opinion he perfectly agreed. He differed on the principle of the plan however of the worthy Baronet, and he differed from him also on some of the points in

in his argument, particularly where he represented the advances from the Bank to Government to be less than they were in general believed to be. Notwithstanding this difference of opinion however he gave his hearty assent to the clause for confining the duration of the bill to a shorter date.

Mr. *S. Thornton* declared, that if the Bank was held in the thralldom of terror, as had been represented, it ought to be open immediately. For himself, he was only a trustee for the proprietors of the Bank, and so far as his trust was engaged, he averred that he endeavoured conscientiously to discharge it. The honourable Baronet in alluding to the affairs of the Bank, had stated, that they were not adequate to their demands. This he denied, and protested, that whatever might be the various opinions upon the present restriction of specie, that restriction did not rise from the operations of the Bank itself, but from other causes which he was not at liberty to describe. The worthy Baronet had complained of the diminution of coinage in late years, but he had not stated to what that diminution ought solely to be attributed. It was occasioned by a proportionate scarcity of bullion in the country, which of course confined the coinage. In regard to the re-payment of the loan he differed from the worthy Baronet, because that loan might be considered as correspondent with unfunded debt, and every person knew that the more the floating debt was funded the circulating medium would circulate more widely. Besides some of the advances to Government were not revocable for years; the land tax, for instance, remained partly due for 1794, 1795, and 1796, whereas the money advanced by the Bank for commercial purposes returned every six weeks or two months at farthest. As to the compact which was said to subsist between Government and the Bank, he solemnly declared, that during the eight years in which he had been connected with the Bank, he knew of no partiality whatever, and in regard to salaries, he declared with equal earnestness, that in the course of that time he had constantly endeavoured faithfully to discharge his trust without the least unfair emolument.

The motion was then put, "That the original words should stand part of the bill;" which was agreed to without a division. The bill was then passed, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer desired to carry the same to the Lords for their concurrence.

The Irish dividend bill was committed and the report ordered to be brought up on Monday,—Adjourned to Monday.

HOUSE

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *April 10.*

The Bank Indemnity Bill was read a first time.

The Duke of *Bedford*, understanding that it was the intention of their Lordships to adjourn that day for a fortnight, said, that the first report of the Committee on the finances would be made immediately after the recess. It was intended that it should be made before Thursday, if their Lordships had sat till that day.

On the motion of Lord *Auckland* their Lordships adjourned to Monday the 24th instant.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, *April 10.*

The names of the defaulters in attending the Call of the House were called over, and such as sent certificates of ill health were excused.

Mr. *Bryan Edwards* gave notice that, soon after the recess, he should move for a repeal of the act of George II. which makes negroes personal assets; as also for a repeal of the act for opening certain free ports in the West Indies.

Colonel *Porter* moved for an account of the list of fees in the War Office, and an account of the servants in the army, which were ordered.

MOTION FOR PEACE.

Mr. *Pollen* said, I rise, Sir, in pursuance of the notice which I gave some time ago to offer a motion to the House, which I should have brought forward on the day appointed when that notice was first given, if I had not been induced by my respect for certain persons in the confidence of Government, and my consideration for subjects deemed by them to be of more momentary importance, to defer it to a time of more convenience and leisure. I therefore postponed it to this day. And now, Sir, when I view so many gentlemen about me, who have been in possession of opportunities equal to my own, and at the same time, Sir, command an experience and aid so far superior, I must beg leave to throw myself upon your patience and impartiality, and upon the candour of the House in general, for an attentive hearing through a discussion of topics which nothing but a sincere, though perhaps a mistaken, idea of my duty could have urged me to attempt. However much the talents and abilities of particular persons, attached to different

rent parties, may excite my admiration and praise, I think I have sometimes seen an absorption of liberality, and a tendency to debate with an equal, though an opposite degree of animosity and skill, than a mutual contest for the attainment of the most beneficial objects, and an equal tendency to the general good. I have frequently, moreover, found a debate so implicated with foreign matter, that it has even been difficult for you, Sir, with your utmost assiduity and apprehension, to pursue it through all its mazes, and wind up its result. These errors, therefore, I will endeavour, as well as I am able, to rectify; and while I try to make my statements clear, explicit, and concise, I will try to make the proposition also, which I mean to build upon these statements, so fair and reasonable, that I may gain the approbation and support of every one. I know, Sir, that I may be told, this is the forlorn hope of a juvenile and sanguine imagination. I know, also, that as some censure will of necessity be imputed by me upon those in power, that I may be told, it is easy for the empty hand to blame the prodigality of the full one. I am aware of the liability of the man who sits upon a barren rock, and beholds a vessel dashed by the violence of the waves against it, to condemn the conduct of the pilot; but I trust I shall not contemplate the labours of any person struggling with a storm with such severity, because I may not chance to be exposed to the difficulties of that storm myself. I look upon the present as a time, Sir, when every heart should glow with ardour, and every hand be stretched forth with active energy to save a sinking State; and I conceive no person ought to blame the pilot before his conduct, and the difficulties he has had to contend with, be fairly and fully submitted to their investigation. So much, Sir, by way of preliminary observation, and now I shall proceed to the more accurate discussion of my subject.

Having commenced the war in which we still unfortunately are engaged with a confederacy of the most powerful States in Europe, we have at length forced ourselves into open hostilities with some, and receive a trifling assistance only from others, by the means of pecuniary compensation, while the menace with which we threatened to invade the metropolis of France has been silenced by the vigorous power of the enemy, and a dagger like our own is in return unsheathed against us. To counterbalance these alarms, however, much figurative language has been used to paint to us the sufferings of the enemy. But surely, Sir, if the people of France do suffer, as they must from all the accumulating miseries of war, the people of France must pant for peace, in proportion to their sufferings

ings, as earnestly as the inhabitants of England. Why then, it may be asked, do they not come before the bar of the Directory, and in one general prevailing voice demand it? The reason, Sir, in my poor mind, is short and satisfactory. It is because the people of France either do of themselves believe, or have, by wilful and industrious misrepresentation, been taught to believe, that the continuance of the war, and with it the continuance of all their horrible calamities, depends entirely on the ambition and the tyranny of Great Britain. The deduction from this statement, then, may be resolved in one short question: Is England, the sovereign of the sea, the parent of commerce, the arbiter of the arts, the bright example of liberality, to be branded with so vile a name as the Fomentor of Discord? No: if the people of France have formed a wrong judgment of our moderation, let their judgment be immediately corrected. Or if they have been deluded with false and self-interested misrepresentations, let them be informed with accuracy of our peaceable intentions, and drive the base usurpers from their seats. This information is at this crisis more necessary, because the safety, and not only the safety, but the very existence of the country depend upon its commerce, and its public credit, which is the only basis of its commerce. These have already been shaken to their foundations, and nothing but a peace can restore them. It may be said, however, that the temper of the French is not yet sufficiently tranquillized for such a desirable event. If any of the gentlemen who formerly urged such doctrines, or now profess these opinions, should still declare them, in answer to those gentlemen, I would say, are we to be laid under all the burdens which the war imposes, and endure those evils which the war inflicts, until we have tranquillized their temper by gratifying their ambition with a still greater extent of power, or until we have positively overturned their present system of government, and established a new one, with the risque, if not the loss, of every thing that is dear and valuable to ourselves? If this preposterous idea is to be indulged, let us turn our attention to the speeches delivered in the Council of Five Hundred, by Dupont Nemours, and Dumoulard, for peace, which speeches were received with enthusiastic approbation, and then decide whether the temper of the people be not sufficiently tranquillized to maintain the relations of peace and amity with faith and honour. It is a well known fact, as far as the attestation of public and concurrent testimonies can prove it, that when the news arrived in France of the felons debarked in Wales, a majority did demand the reasons of the Directory for that debarkation,

barkation, and the pretended obstinacy of the English in the prosecution of the war, was still considered to be a satisfactory cause for more distressing measures. Now I wish to have it ascertained, whether the people of England will submit to be considered as the causes of such distresses. If any objection be made to my bringing forward any motion, for interfering with the operations of the Executive Government towards the attainment of a peace, I know it may be urged, that I was one of those who voted for the Address to his Majesty upon the failure of the late negotiation; and I am aware it may be said, that I therefore act inconsistently on the present occasion. In answer to that observation I have two points to state, which will, I hope, prevail in my excuse. First, at that time, I placed an unreserved confidence in Ministers. I believed that they had earnestly and sincerely endeavoured to produce a peace upon such terms as might be reasonably consented to by every party; and supposing they had failed unwillingly on their part in the negotiation, I still believed them able and desirous to accomplish that object: and if I had not supposed them sincere in their negotiation, I think I should have sacrificed some little disappointment to my prejudices in their favour. The other, and the most material point, Sir, is, the Bank had not stopped payment: There is an immense difference between the influence of opulence and want; between a settled credit and suspicion! The change of affairs since then have caused a change in many; and I may well be pardoned, I trust, for falling under that fatal influence. Besides, Sir, when I look into the dismal catalogue of miseries incidental to the war; when I see my brothers dying in the putrid urns of western pestilence, and behold the mangled body of my friend, is it not common to humanity to mourn their sufferings, and blame the cause! Mr. Pollen said, it had been stated in this country, and, indeed, in that House, that the negotiation had been broken off from the insulting proceedings and exorbitant demands of the French. On the contrary, the same was stated on their part with regard to this country. He by no means intended to give it as his own opinion, that what was alledged by the Executive Directory of France on this head was just or true. He did not even mean to give it as his opinion, that what he was about to allude to was really official, and came from the Directory, but he hoped he should be allowed to read, as part of his speech, an extract from the *Redacteur* of December 24, three days after the departure of Lord Malmesbury, which was in general supposed to be an official paper, and which contained particular strictures on the breaking off of the negotiation, which to him

him appeared highly interesting, as, if they were false, he thought it would be necessary they should be shewn to be so. It was not his intention either to throw the slightest degree of blame or censure upon the manner in which the breaking off of the negotiation had been communicated in this country. His only aim was to shew the face which the French Directory, or those employed by them, actually put upon that transaction, and the inferences they drew from it, against the sincerity and real intentions of his Majesty's Ministers in favour of that peace which they affected to be anxious and desirous to obtain. Mr. Pollen observed, that there were only two notes delivered by the Minister of the French, on the part of the Executive Directory; and that, in consequence of these, a great many of the French Journals had been filled with every species of insult and opprobrium on the conduct of the Executive Government. Three days after the departure of Lord Malmesbury, there were published in the official paper called the *Redacteur*—"Observations upon the Dismissal of Lord Malmesbury," an extract from which he held in his hand, and which he had taken from Mons. Peltier's pamphlet, in which it had been introduced. He assured the House it was a literal translation, and in substance was as near as we can recollect to the following purport:

EXTRACT READ AS PART OF THE SPEECH.

"The French Directory state their own eagerness for Peace; but that the same anxiety was not shewn on the part of Lord Malmesbury. After enumerating his various delays, they state, that his Lordship had signed his two memorials; they say a slight review of their contents must make every Frenchman partake of the indignation with which the Directory considered them, and must make them see the necessity of sending away the man who dared to propose them.

"England therein dictates in the first place, that restitution shall be made to his Majesty the Emperor and King, of all his dominions, on the same footing as before the war.

"England then proceeds imperiously to violate the treaties made with the greater part of the Princes of Germany. These treaties are of no esteem in the eyes of England, it is only with his Imperial Majesty that France can conclude them. It is on his Imperial Majesty that the English Government would have the Peace depend, which the Republic has granted to the powers of Germany who have detached themselves from the coalition.

"The evacuation of Italy is then proposed by England. We must abandon *cir-devant* Savoy and the county of Nice. We must use with respect to the inhabitants of those countries the same perfidy as towards the ancient Belgians!

"To these clauses, avowedly infamous, succeed clauses which conceal with a little more care the disgrace with which the English government would wish to cover us.

"It reserves to the Court of St. Petersburg the full and unlimited privilege of entering into the negotiation when it shall think proper. Portugal next appears in the plan of his Lordship, and he proposes by the memorial that in the treaty with Portugal every burthenfome condition on both sides shall be put out of the question.

"After having lightly passed over the interests of Spain, to whom he supposes there

there is no indemnity due, he speaks of Holland, and his pretensions in this respect are bordering upon madness.

"According to them the French Republic ought to traffic with Batavian liberty. We must restore the Stadtholdership to Holland. France must abandon this Republic, a friend to the new Revolution, and trampling under foot the most sacred agreements, and violating without shame the faith of treaties, must bring upon that nation all the horrors which would accompany the revival of the Orange government.

"And what would be the reward of this infamy? Would not one naturally suppose that England would offer in return to restore that which she obtained from Holland by treason? Would not one suppose that she would to this offer an indemnity to be hereafter agreed upon? No! She merely offers the restitution of a part of that which she does not blush to call a conquest. She announces her intention to keep the Cape and the island of Ceylon, in order to preserve the balance of Europe, a balance, which, according to her sense of it, consists in her having every thing, and the other powers nothing.

"Lord Malmesbury lastly desires if the French will not consent to deliver up Holland, that they should then give to the Emperor and King, all that which Holland has ceded to France by treaty.

"Behold the conditions of Peace of the noble Lord! They must doubtless be considered by every man whose heart is not shut to the love of his country, and by every man who respects the laws, and the faith due to treaties, as the call to war. It is disgrace and perfidy which the English propose to us. It is the violation of our constitution, and of our good faith. It is the destruction of our principles; the restoration of emigrants; the restitution of their estates; the counter-revolution, anarchy, and civil war. These are the evils—these are the miseries—these are the united crimes which they propose to us, under the delusion of a demand for Peace."

"I have only to add," says he, "that I have merely adduced these statements as a proof that the French nation does believe we are the sole causes of the prosecution of the war, and we ought to know whether these statements are founded upon fact. Because then it becomes this House, his Majesty, and each of us individually as representatives of the people of England, to issue a counter declaration, in order that the distress of millions may not any longer be attributed to a mistaken or misrepresented cause. For this purpose I call on the friends of administration to defend it against the misrepresentations of the Directory, if such they be, and I call upon gentlemen on the opposite side not to defend administration, because that I do not expect, but to defend their country. Upon these grounds, if my expectations be true, which I confess may be the result of juvenile warmth. I hope both sides will co-operate in the support of the motion I propose to offer, that no part of Europe, or the civilized world may say, England has done those things to prolong the miseries of war which she should not. I therefore think it my duty, Sir, to move,

"That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, stating, that it appears to this House, upon mature consideration of the abrupt failure of the late negotiation

tion for Peace with France, that the gracious and benign intentions of his Majesty had either been misconceived by the French Directory and the French nation, or that they had been ill explained to the French people; and humbly praying that his Majesty would, without delay, be graciously pleased to adopt such speedy measures as may to his wisdom and judgment seem likely to be efficacious to remove every misconception or misrepresentation which may have been entertained by the Directory or the French nation, relative to the goodness and sincerity of the intentions by which his Majesty was actuated to produce a fair and honourable Peace."

The motion being seconded by Sir *John Macpherson*, Major *Elford* rose, and gave a decided negative to the motion.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, "When I consider the motion of the honourable gentleman, when I advert to the arguments which he has adduced in support of his motion, and when I observe the terms of the motion itself, and compare them with the situation of the country at the moment when that motion is brought forward, it will only be necessary for me, Sir, to trouble you and the House with a few words, to shew that no practical benefit whatever can arise either from the motion itself or from the arguments by which it is supported. To notice those arguments, however, which I shall do but briefly, I have to observe, that the hon. gentleman first began with what no man would dispute, a lamentation of the evils incurred by war. The evils of war, however, constitute a topic which has often been expatiated upon, and which is easily discussed; and until the hon. gentleman has either found a remedy for these evils by new modelling human nature, by conducting human affairs in a different mode from what they are at present, or by suggesting some practicable system by which wars may in future be totally and effectually excluded, I am apprehensive the distresses and calamities of war, as they always have existed, will exist to the end of time. If the war was undertaken or conducted upon principles of aggrandizement, or motives of ambition, the hon. gentleman might have dwelt upon the miseries which it has inflicted with more propriety; but as no war in a well regulated nation can be undertaken, I trust, before the causes and the consequences of it be well considered, and as it will then be undertaken only I conceive upon the best and most unalterable principles of justice, policy, and self defence, such arguments tend to no practical benefit, but on the contrary they pervert the advantages they labour

labour to promote, while the lamentation over the misfortunes they partly produce, weakens the energy which might otherwise resist them. Every evil of war is or ought to be, viewed on the comparison of two alternatives; and the wisest and most serviceable mode of endeavouring to prevent the accumulation of them, would be by entering first into a fair and impartial investigation of their causes, and enquiring whether the immediate evil was smaller and preferable to the more remote, and whether the meeting of a comparatively light and present danger would obviate and frustrate a severer calamity in future. Without such a comparison a weak and fruitless lamentation over the misfortunes incidental to a situation of distress and difficulty, are enough to over-rule any exertions of any country, however innocent that country, however justifiable and necessary its exertions may be. The hon. Gentleman next came to the discussion of the change in the situation of this country since the return of Lord Malmesbury from Paris, after his abrupt dismissal, and the rejection of the offers which he made to negotiate for peace. And here, Sir, I must beg leave to tell the honourable Gentleman, that whatever might be his degree of feeling at the prospect of peace, during the negotiation of that noble Lord, in which I hope and trust the House and the country will believe me to be sincere in saying, my degree of feeling in the prospect of a peace could not be less ardent or sanguine than his; that a peace does not depend upon the earnestness of your desires for it; nor does it depend upon any previous declarations of this House, which, in my opinion, are rather apt to frustrate than accelerate the object you solicit; but it depends upon the free but reasonable operations of the Executive Government, the disposition of the enemy, and the general posture of affairs, combined with various other circumstances too numerous and too complex to detail. The third part of the honourable Gentleman's arguments I understand to be grounded, not upon the statement of an opinion of his own, that the Executive Government of this country manifested insincerity in the negotiation; not grounded upon any opinion of his own, that the terms proposed by this country as the grounds for peace were inadequate or unjust; not grounded upon any opinion of his own, that all or any of these difficulties could not be obviated; nor did he profess to state, that he concurred with the majority of the people in this country in the opinion, that the demands of the enemy were exorbitant and unjust, but

but he alledges that he has reason to suppose, that suffering as the French people must do under the inevitable horrors of war, they must earnestly and anxiously desire peace, and on that ground, he assumes that a few paragraphs which appeared so long ago as the 24th of December in a French paper, tending to shake off the odium of the breach of the late negociation for peace, and throw it on this country, must have been an official manifesto, and published upon especial authority. It is true the hon. gentleman does not state that he is perfectly satisfied of the authenticity of the statements in that paper, but he thinks them sufficiently authentic and justifiable for calling in question the sincerity of the Executive Government of this country in the late negociation; and he furthermore thinks that something ought immediately to be attempted, to do away any impression which the statements of that paper might have on the opinions of the people in France, and Europe in general, to refute the effects of any argument which might insidiously be urged to misrepresent the sincerity of our desires for a peace, and to satisfy the people of France and the Directory, in case they had mistaken our intentions, as he is in some degree at least inclined to imagine, that we meant seriously, and sincerely to obtain a peace if possible, on fair and reasonable terms. Now, Sir, let us examine upon what solid and practicable principle this House is invited to adopt a mode of proceeding so novel and extraordinary, and as I conceive conducive to no good effect. It is invited, you will please to observe, not upon any given authority that the statements are actually true, or that they are actually official; not upon any clear and explicit measure proposed, whence any real and permanent advantage can be derived; not upon any solid declaration that specific terms of negociation on the part of the enemy either have been or will be offered; but it is invited upon a deduction of probable or conceivable facts, and from an uncertain inference of probable or conceivable facts, it seems it may be desirous to address his Majesty to adopt such measures as may tend to refute those arguments if they have been mistaken, or to rectify them if they have been misrepresented. It is impossible for any one not to perceive that the honourable gentleman, by quoting from the paper he has referred to, has been misrepresenting the whole proceedings of the late negociation, for by passing over some circumstances and by perverting others, he has inferred that the Directory were conscious if they published

lished that declaration, considering it as the honourable gentleman had considered it, to be the true state of the case, that the Ministers of this country could not afterwards appeal to the judgment of their own countrymen. That the Directory had misrepresented the intentions and the terms of this country, were evident; and after treating the overtures as they did, it would surely be a very singular ground for Parliament to ground any parliamentary proceeding upon, and thereby expose the nation to an additional insult. But above all, it would be singular by a manifesto to refute a declaration which it had no authority to prove official, and declare at the same time a mode to encourage the enemy to defeat the very practical measures which it adopted to restore tranquillity. If any means can be found for restoring tranquillity upon a permanent, safe, and honourable basis, I trust that I am not only sensible of my duty to do it, but I likewise trust that I am also impressed with a sincere and earnest idea of carrying that sense of duty into execution. If then, upon minute investigation, or upon subsequent enquiry, it shall appear that no practicable measure for obtaining a speedy and honourable Peace upon a permanent and solid basis has been omitted; if it shall appear that the Ministers of this country have neglected no opportunity to treat with the enemy, without betraying how they might tend to raise the hopes or demands of that enemy, or proceeding in such a manner as might tend to shake the good faith and fortitude of our allies; if it should appear, that no additional chance for negotiation remains to be used, but what has been already used, or that no mode is likely to be more successful than what has been already adopted; if it shall appear that the success of a negotiation does not depend so much on what is said as what is done; that it is not dependent upon argument but measures; if upon enquiry it should be found that the conduct of the Executive Government of this country has been so clear, that any attempt to impeach it must prove ineffectual; if it shall be found that Ministers, however subject to misrepresentation in the opinion of the hon. gentleman, they may be, have not only already performed the whole of what his motion would propose, but even gone beyond the direct terms of his address; then, Sir, I trust that both the House and country will agree with me, that if the hon. gentleman be neither prepared by his argument nor his specific motion to do so much as government is prepared to do, that the one would be superfluous, and the other dangerous.

ous. What may be the situation of this country, Sir, I cannot determine; and where we have experienced so many disappointments, and so much injustice, I cannot be sanguine enough to point out the precise effects of any endeavour on the part of this country towards the attainment of peace. But, thus far I may be permitted to state: the prospect of a speedy and honourable peace, upon a permanent and solid basis, depends upon a conduct of the House entirely the reverse of the encouragement which would be given to the enemy by the arguments and motion of the honourable Gentleman; since it is evident that we ought not earnestly to wish for, or shew, a desire for peace beyond the limits of our hopes for gratifying that desire with honour and permanent safety.

Such, Sir, are my feelings! Such have been the feelings of this House! Such ever have been the feelings of Englishmen; and such I trust they will be to the end of time, that the prospect of their desires is within their reach, without which peace is nothing but a delusion. There may be a chance for making overtures of peace which the Executive Government only know how to come at, and cannot conveniently divulge. Break down that paling by an imprudent and hasty step, and without adding to the dignity of Parliament, the whole plan of your benefit is shaken, and you are laying a ground for additional insult. If at this very moment an actual negotiation be depending, it must be evident to every one that this is the moment, above all, in which the honourable Gentleman should most study to avoid giving any instance of interruption, or any opportunity to the enemy of evading your proposals. In regard to the Bank, the honourable Gentleman will see it is impossible for me to enter into any detail at this critical situation of affairs; for we are now most in the situation to be careful by our exertions to disappoint the avowed policy of the enemy, who have been ever vigilant and active in seizing every opportunity to disunite the allies. Though I do not chuse to enter into any detail, I have, however, no difficulty to satisfy the honourable Gentleman, by declaring, that the plan concerted by Ministers secures more than his motion points at. In consequence of a communication from the Court of Vienna of an overture received from France for a separate negotiation, which I have before alluded to in this House, and of a determination expressed by our faithful ally the Emperor not to enter into any negotiation for peace, without the consent of his Britannic Majesty, steps have since been taken in this country, in order, if possible, to make use of that opportunity for a renewal of a joint negotiation.

And I have no difficulty in saying, that such have been the steps, and such the conduct upon this occasion, that his Majesty has determined to send a person of confidence to Vienna, with such instructions as appear most likely to forward the object of pacification, in concert with his Majesty's allies. Further than this I cannot state. But comparing this with the arguments and motion of the honourable Gentlemen, and keeping in mind that we ought now to be most cautious how we give the enemy an opportunity to disunite our alliance, I trust it will not be necessary for me to do more than to say, that the object in view by the honourable Gentleman's motion has already been promoted.

Colonel *Porter* observed, that after so repeatedly hearing the declamations of gentlemen on the opposite side of the House in favour of the flourishing state of commerce, and looking into the distressed situation of the country, of which nothing could give a more lamentable proof than that every one department of Government was in debt, he could on no account agree to repose any confidence whatever in his Majesty's Ministers. He was free to declare, that he did not in his conscience believe that the declaration made by the right honourable Gentleman, which mentioned a negociation to be immediately entered on in conjunction with the Emperor, was to be relied on by the House. He would therefore support his honourable friend's motion, as he was convinced it could produce no possible harm, and might eventually prove highly advantageous to the country.

Mr. *Addington*, before he delivered his sentiments, wished to ascertain whether the honourable mover, after what had fallen, was inclined to withdraw his motion.

Mr. *Pollen* said, he had only heard arguments on one side, and should certainly wish to hear the subject discussed on both.

Mr. *Addington* said, that he had flattered himself that, after what had fallen during the debate, the honourable Gentleman would have been induced to withdraw his motion; but as that was not the case, he should trouble the House with a few observations. It had been frequently observed in that House, that in times like the present, full of difficulty and danger, it was the duty of every man to speak his sentiments out fully and boldly. He perfectly agreed in that opinion; and if he had delivered his sentiments upon the various motions for peace that had been from time to time made, he should have stated, without disguise, his opinion of their dangerous tendency. The firmness which had been evinced by the majority of the
House

House had been conspicuous, and he trusted it would continue, for upon that firmness the safety of the country, in his opinion, depended. The honourable Gentleman had grounded his motion upon the statements which appeared in a French paper, whether with or without the authority of the Directory had not been stated. With respect to the two grounds contained in that paper, viz. our being the cause of the war, and the insincerity of the British Government in its proposals for peace, he begged to say a few words. In the year 1792 this country enjoyed a state of prosperity almost unparalleled; our commerce, our manufactures, were at the highest pitch of prosperity, and there could be no doubt that, under those circumstances, there could be no man in the country who was more interested for the preservation of peace than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because the interruption of peace must tend to frustrate the financial arrangements in which he was so anxiously and so successfully employed. The unwillingness of Ministers to interfere in the contest, and their determination to preserve peace, was most incontrovertibly manifested, in the month of May in that year, by their making a very material reduction in the naval and military establishments. But there were some important events that year which must have made a strong impression upon the British Government. The defeats of the Prussian army, and the events of the 10th of August, were not sufficient to induce Ministers to alter their system; but after the battle of Jemappe, when the empire was threatened, and after the famous decree relative to the Scheldt, they could no longer consider themselves as indifferent spectators, but began to prepare for what might happen. The convention placing great confidence in the declarations of the Jacobin societies in this country (and, in his opinion, every man who signed them acted traitorously to his country), declared war against Great Britain. This war had now continued for four years; and he would do the gentlemen on the other side of the House the justice to say, that if they were really of opinion that the Government of this country could have avoided the war, or had rejected any fair opportunities of procuring peace, they were consistent in their conduct; for they regularly every session brought forward motions expressive of these sentiments. It had been stated, and with triumph, that we were now forced to adopt that very conduct which we formerly rejected; but he begged to ask gentlemen, whether there was no difference between the present Government of France and those which existed when many of those motions were made? Was France now what France was then? At the period when the right

honourable Gentleman opposite brought forward one of his motions for peace, the faction of Robespierre prevailed: within six weeks after the motion was negatived that faction ceased to exist. Suppose, for a moment, that the House had adopted the motion, and that Ministers had attempted and succeeded in a negotiation, the result must either have proved favourable or unfavourable. If the latter had been the case, who was there among the Minister's friends that would have ventured to defend him? If it had terminated in a peace, he contended the consequences would have been still worse, for the succeeding faction repealed every one act of his reign. What, then, would have been the situation of this country, if, in the confidence of peace, we had repealed the Alien Bill? The consequence would have been, that we should have exchanged a foreign contest for a civil war; and we should again have been forced into a war with France. Upon these grounds it appeared to him, that the decision of the House in rejecting that motion was founded in wisdom and policy. Another honourable Gentleman brought forward a motion for peace at a period at no great distance from the former. It was brought forward soon after the Convention had declared, that they would make peace with those powers who were not aggressors in the war; that they would make peace with Holland, but not with England. It was then that they avowed that horrid principle, that treaties might, and sometimes ought, to be violated. This was first broached by M. Brissot. This was the period chosen for the second motion for peace. Peace was seldom made between two belligerent powers, except under one or other of the following circumstances: either when both parties are tired out by the war, and seek an opportunity of making their pacific sentiments known to each other; or where one party was so completely beaten as to be obliged to sue for peace. He trusted we were not in the latter situation; our resources were not so exhausted that we must beg for peace. He desired to know by what one act of the Convention, or any of the governing powers of France, any disposition for peace had been shewn, from Barrere, Robespierre, Tallien, or the Directory? During that which was called the moderate period, after the destruction of Robespierre, many persons entertained strong hopes that they would manifest a desire for peace. He never entertained such an opinion, and was not disappointed; for the same system of resentment was displayed against this country.

When the separate peace was made with Prussia, the Reporter stated to the Convention, that they had made a separate peace,

peace, in obedience to their orders. If any farther proofs were necessary, look to their conduct in the last campaign, when it was evidently their object to compel the Emperor to a separate peace, and with the same view was their last offer to that monarch. These offers were rejected with a spirit that did the highest honour to the royal faith and magnanimity of our ally, of that ally whom we had been called upon to desert. As long as there was no regular Government in France, no government that could have afforded us any security for a peace, he conceived that Ministers acted right in not attempting a negotiation. But the first moment that a Government was established there, that appeared capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity, his Majesty declared from the throne, that a favourable change had taken place, which might lead to a negotiation. This was followed by a message from the throne, couched in still more explicit terms, declaring that the principal bar to negotiation was now done away. It was unnecessary to recall to the recollection of the House the proposals of Mr. Wickham at Basle, or the negotiation of Lord Malmesbury, of which last he should only observe, that the French had never thought proper to contradict the statement given by that noble Lord. If, under the present circumstances we were to make any application, the enemy might suppose we were driven to it from the recent circumstances relative to the bank.

It had been said, that the members of that House had lost the confidence of their constituents: how did that appear? What was the cause of it? Was it from doing too much or too little with respect to the internal defence of the country, for Ministers had been accused of both? Was it for the satisfaction they expressed, when the negotiations opened to them the prospect of a peace? or was it at the concern they manifested when those negotiations were broken off? Looking then at the situation of the country as he did, conceiving her to be possessed of abundant wealth, notwithstanding our temporary embarrassments, he was satisfied we had only to act with spirit and we should find ourselves strong and rich. On the other hand, if we displayed untimely parsimony or pusillanimity, we should find ourselves both weak and poor. He hoped they would not adopt such shallow policy, which would only tend to degrade the dignity and character of the country, and he should always be of opinion that interest was inseparably connected with honour,

nour, both in a nation, and in an individual. He trusted that the commerce, and wealth of the country would not induce them to adopt timid measures; but if they did, if the burthens under which we now laboured had so dispirited the people as to take away the spirit which we had hitherto manifested, then indeed it was time to beg pardon of the French, and to throw ourselves on their mercy; but he was sure there was no such despondency in the country. Some little gloom there might be, but it had not pervaded all ranks of men. Much had been said of the calamities of war, and of the comforts attending a state of peace: nobody but a madman could hesitate between the two, if left to his free choice; but if compelled into the war, then all this was mere declamation, tending only to unnerve the arm of the country. The House of Commons were anxious for peace, and so were the Ministers; and he only hoped they would not retard it by their anxiousness to obtain it.

It had been asked what we had gained by this war? Those who asked that question should recollect that this was a defensive war, and, therefore, that was not a proper question. But we had retained our character, we had made great conquests, and had made a fortunate discovery of easy and successful means of preserving internal tranquility, and we had found out a good mode of manning the navy. We had nearly destroyed the marine of France, and had given a severe blow to that of Spain; and in all our naval transactions the glory of our flag had been carried to a higher pitch than it ever had been before. We had, in a great degree, stopped those dangerous principles, and even the men who broached them seemed now to be ashamed of them. We had secured our honour, our liberty, and, he trusted, our constitution. These were some of the advantages which were gained by the war. Upon these grounds he should vote against the motion, and move the order of the day.

The motion being read, and the question put on the order of the day.

Mr. Fox rose and spoke to the following effect:

It would be difficult for me, consistently with my duty, to give a silent vote upon the question that is now before the House upon this extraordinary day. After all that this country has suffered, after all the calamities that are brought upon us, and after contemplating the calamities that are impending, we have to consider whether we will address the throne for the purpose of facilitating peace, which I think, which I trust this House, which I know this country thinks, is the only

only means to repair our misfortune, and to avert our impending ruin. What is it that is now stated to the House by those who oppose this motion? What does the Minister himself, who has had so large a share in producing your present calamities, and who, therefore, ought to feel for them, propose to you to-night? What, but a desire that you would persist in continuing that confidence in him which has brought you to that calamity; that you should continue that forbearance which is the source of your misfortune: that you should still trust to those councils which have been so fatal. He is for ever the same character, although he comes before you in different shapes. When he is called upon by those who are the most willing to trust him, to take some step that may lead to peace, he comes forward with a promise that he will do so, nay that he is actually doing it. Promises you have had from him in abundance, but not one of them has he fulfilled. We are told this day, as I understand, the City of London was informed in the morning, that a Gentleman in a confidential character is going to Vienna, the object of whose mission was to be explained this evening to the House of Commons. How far that has been explained, I leave to this House to reflect upon. But it seems Mr. Hammond, of whose abilities I have no doubt, is going to Vienna, and upon this the Minister expects you to stop at once in the performance of your public duty. He is going upon the subject of peace, and under that general head, supposing his employers to be sincere in desiring to forward that event, he would go with the unanimous wish of the people of this country. But upon that sincerity I have great doubts. What is the reason then of this embassy? I am afraid it is too much like that which took place last summer; when the French arms were victorious: when the situation of the Emperor was critical, as admitted by all, desperate, as thought by many; then you took a step similar to that which is now about to be taken, and that was afterwards followed by your sending a negociator to Paris. I know that some persons chuse to forget the dates and circumstances of these events; because that when Lord Malmesbury was sent to Paris, the French had met with some defeats. That we were in a state more prosperous when that noble Lord went to Paris than we had been some time before is true; but when the measure was taken that led to that embassy, we were in a situation the most disastrous. I will not question, because I have no means of proving, how far

far the Minister was sincere when he adopted that measure; I am heartily inclined to think he was sincere in his endeavours to make peace when it was impossible for him to make a good one, for I do know that there is a natural connection between haughtiness and meanness, and under the terms he was sent it was as impossible to obtain a good peace, as if he had not at all been sent to Paris. But there was another point to be considered with that embassy: it took place when there was a loan to be obtained, and he continued at Paris until that loan was concluded; we are now at a period in which the French have been victorious and the emperor's situation desperate, we are now also to negotiate a loan, and we are now, as we were then, called upon to confide in the professions of the Minister. This is the way in which the Minister chooses to gloss over the duplicity of his conduct: we are now to negotiate in conjunction with the Emperor, and Buonaparte is to be the negociator for peace for us both. The Minister tells us, "Do not put me under difficulties by your untimely interference. It is a principle, that the House of Commons should confide in the Executive Government when they are endeavouring to negotiate for peace." To that, as a general principle, I have no difficulty in assenting, although, perhaps, I should not agree with the Minister as to the extent to which that principle may be carried. The question is not here, whether any Minister, under any circumstances, should have the confidence of this House pending a negotiation; but, whether the present Minister, under the present circumstances, ought to have that confidence? And here it is not improper to recur to what had happened in this House two years ago: a motion was made by an honourable Gentleman not at all hostile to the present Minister in his general line of politics (Mr. Wilberforce). What was then the language? The very same language as we have heard this day: "Do not vote for this proposition, but trust to me." Then comes the common place argument, that every Minister must be interested in obtaining peace. I see no reason why that desire should be peculiar to a Minister. Was not Lord North in the same situation during the last war? Has not every Minister been in the same situation? What is there peculiar in the character or situation of the present Minister that should lead us to suppose that he is more sincere in his professions of peace than any other Minister? Upon the occasion to which I have alluded, the present Minister said he should

should be ready to negotiate whenever the enemy should appear to be in a state capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other powers. What happened then? The Minister prevailed upon the House to do then what he asks you to do now, to confide in his professions of sincerity. The House did not interfere with its authority, which it ought to have done, but did that which it ought not to have done, it confided in an idea that a negotiation would soon take place; no negotiation, however, was attempted. After this, a considerable time elapsed, and then there came from the Throne a declaration which stated, that from circumstances which had taken place in France, a negotiation might be attempted. I thought, and I believe the people of this country thought, that the period was much too long before that negotiation was attempted. It was, however, at last attempted, through the medium of Mr. Wickham, and afterwards carried on by the embassy of Lord Malmesbury, and the whole conduct of it is so marked, and the public opinion upon it so well made up, that I need not add any opinion of mine upon the subject. It came to be discussed in this House, and we were told, after every means had been made use of to evade all measures that could lead to any serious negotiation, that there was not a heart in England so profligate as to wish, nor a hand so dastardly as to sign, nor was there to be found a man so degenerate as to be the Courier of a commission to be sent to France to stipulate for Peace. The Courier will, and must be found, and I trust the hand will be seen that will sign a Peace with France. I say we have tried our Executive Government enough to be confident we can do no good to our country by trying such means any longer. Let us now try means which we have not tried; my opinion is that, let who will be the negotiators for Peace, certainly still more if the present Ministers are to be the negotiators, the chance of obtaining it will be infinitely increased if Parliament should give that negotiation the sanction of its vote. If it should appear to be the dictate of Parliament, it will give to those who you are to negotiate with a pledge of sincerity which they have not had, and I think I need not add that the French doubt the sincerity of our present Executive Government.

The gentleman who spoke last has gone over the history of the war, and dwelt a good deal on the declaration of the French to shew their hostility to this country. I admit that their declaration proves their hostility to us. But if we say

that there is a reigning faction in France, that is not likely to be favourable to a Peace, has not that faction a right to say, while you confide in the Minister's professions, in defiance of his acts, that there is a reigning faction in Great-Britain, that is not sincerely desirous for Peace? The expressions of the Directory, as against us, I admit, are very strong, and are inconsistent with what England ought to expect, but compared to the language of the leading faction in the English House of Commons, they are terms of civility, and even politeness, and all that has been said in France, with all its powers of oratory which the leaders there possess, has not produced among the people of that country a greater abhorrence of our Executive Government, than what has been said by the leading faction in this country.

I will not follow the honourable gentleman who spoke last over all the ground which he has gone over; I shall, however, state by the way, that some of the points are mistakenly put by him. He said, that if the propositions which were made by me in the time of Robespierre had been adopted, they would have been reversed by the succeeding faction. There is no authority for coming to that conclusion; so much the contrary, that every measure that was agreed to with respect to external arrangements during the time of Robespierre, have been confirmed and carried into effect by that succeeding faction. But they have made peace with other powers, and have never seriously thought of doing so with Great-Britain. That they should endeavour to make peace with many of the great powers combined against them does not appear wonderful to me, nor wonderful that they have succeeded in such endeavours. But they did not endeavour to make a separate peace with the Emperor? I grant it. But their endeavours against him do not appear to me to be any proof of their extraordinary malice against us, nor does it prove the contrary. It proves only that they have contended against the Emperor in the way they have, because they have the means of annoying the Emperor more than they have the means of annoying us. But to return to the question immediately before us, I would ask, is there any man in this House, or in this country, who thinks that our chance of obtaining peace will be as good by confiding in the promise of Ministers, as if this House came to a declaration upon that subject? Does any man in his conscience believe that the Executive Government can be trusted so well in a negotiation for peace without, as with the injunction of this

this House? What are we to think of those who talked of marching to Paris, if they do not receive the check of this House in their phrenzy? Does any man believe that, with all our advantages and the profit we have had by the easy means we have discovered, as we were told by the gentleman who spoke last, that of quieting the people of this country, that we shall easier obtain peace by trusting to Ministers than by interfering the authority of this House to obtain peace? Of these means I trust the people of this country have a proper feeling. We have found out the means of quieting the people of this country by repealing some of the best provisions of the *Bill of Rights*; are we really to say to Europe that this war was carried on to procure these advantages of quieting the people of this country, and that we could only pass these measures when we had a large standing army, which was ostensibly raised against a foreign foe, but which, in reality, was intended to enable our Executive Government to carry into effect these easy means of quieting the people? I own I do not think it necessary to congratulate the people on these easy means of quieting them. I have heard it said it was wise to sacrifice a part of our liberty to save the remainder, but the part which we have sacrificed appears to be the most material of our constitution.

But let us consider the time in which we are debating those measures. We are not now about to grant millions to the Emperor, to enable him to march to Paris, but to prevent the French, as we are told, from marching to London; this is what I do not believe; but this is the state of the argument as urged by those who oppose this motion. It has been said that we have had an opportunity of shewing the character of the British nation in the present war. I hope that character will always be supported, but I own I think it has been unnecessarily tried. I know of no obligation that we were called upon to shew our good faith in this war, at the commencement, even according to the arguments of the Minister himself, except with regard to Holland, and there our assistance was not asked for; on the contrary, we were told that our friendship would be more dangerous than our neutrality. I wish for no breach of faith on the part of this country, because I know its honour is highly valuable to its interest. I wish a peace may be obtained by us conjointly with the Emperor; but between two evils, I have no difficulty in declaring that a separate peace between the Emperor and France, or between Great-Britain and France,

would be a less evil to us than a continuance of the war upon the present system.—But after all that can be said of the credit of this country, with all the advantages of the Sinking Fund, it must not be dissembled that you are lower in that respect than at any former period of your history. All your conquests in St. Domingo will never bring back to you the millions that you have squandered, nor restore to you the loss you have sustained in lives devoted to that part of your service. This may be called declamation upon the general subject of the war, but it is not so. I am not making a general declamation upon the evils of war, but upon the evils which you have specifically sustained. We entered upon this war upon the general idea that all the powers of Europe would enter into an alliance with us. The result of that policy we have seen. France has gained the alliance of Spain, all the power of Italy, and the Netherlands. They have obtained the neutrality at least, I think the friendship, of the king of Prussia. These are the allies which France has gained, to say nothing of Holland. These are the alliances which France has already gained in the present war! But in addition to these alliances of Spain, Prussia, Italy, the Netherlands and Holland, they have gained an ally which is more formidable to us than all of them together. I mean the *National Debt of Great-Britain*. This is an ally that has been increasing from day to day, and will aid the French much more than all the rest united; and be it remembered that we were told in the outset that this was to be a contest of finance between Great-Britain and France. Our confidence in the Minister will encrease the power of this last and great ally of the French, for the continuance of the war will most rapidly increase our debt. But it seems the French will be encouraged if this House should interfere and dictate to Executive Government. Will they, will they really think worse of your energy if they find that you are determined to take your affairs into your own hands instead of confiding to the present Minister? Will they really expect to make better terms of peace with the people of England, speaking to them through the medium of the representatives, than with the present Executive Government? Do they expect more real care of the interest of the people of England from a reigning faction, than from the people themselves, speaking through the medium of their representatives? I apprehend the contrary; and that, as we should expect more justice
from

from the French people themselves than we do of any faction among them, so would they from Great-Britain; and in that view I should hope that neither the Republic of France would be hostile to Great-Britain, nor the limited monarchy of this country be hostile to the just claims and true interests of the Republic of France. I wish to know what better pledge you could give of sincerity to France in your desire for Peace than to tell them by a vote of the House of Commons that you are willing to negotiate; and what is more likely to lead to a restoration of tranquillity upon a solid and permanent foundation? I do not wish to go now into the question of the terms of Peace; I know, as well as the Minister does, that they cannot now be discussed here, but I believe I may say without danger, that although Belgium was once considered as the cause of breaking off the negotiation for Peace, there would not be much difficulty now between the parties upon that subject. I am afraid it is as little necessary now to say much about Holland; I am afraid too, that disputes will be superfluous as to what part of Italy the Emperor shall possess. I am afraid that the good sense, or if you please, the crying voice of the people of Great-Britain, will not disturb you much in consequence of any concession you make to France upon these points that were once so much an object of your contention. But then are you to sue for Peace? I hope you will never be compelled to do any thing that shall have the appearance of meanness. But surely you should look at your situation; no man thinks that this war is to continue for ever. I will not state any thing that appears to be extravagant, or that is likely to shock you, but I should suppose that I allowed you a tolerable length of time if I allowed you ten years to carry on the war. Now I would ask if there be a man among us who thinks that in the course of ten years you will be likely to stand upon a better ground for negotiation than you do now? Supposing then that France should lose all that she has gained in the present contest, to lose the friendship of Prussia, to lose the alliance of Spain, to lose the Netherlands, to lose Holland, to lose all the power she now possesses in Italy, and that all these powers were to turn, as if by magic, into alliance with you, do you believe that even in such event, extravagant and insane though it be to expect it, do you believe, I say, that this new ally of the French, the National Debt of Great-Britain, would not be equal to them all?—One campaign more will add at least forty millions to your debt: do
you

you believe then, I say, that you will have better terms of Peace than you have at this moment? I have put the case as if you could command victory at all points, just in proportion as you have lost it upon the Continent, almost without exception, since your disaster at Dunkirk. I say nothing against the valour of the Austrian arms, but I ask, if I am stating any thing unreasonable in the rational prospect of your affairs? But it is said that the people of England should not despond. That there is a gloom at this moment over our affairs, which is not warranted by the real state of them. I believe the people of England to be a grave, sober, and sensible people, not easily driven to despondency. But when they see Ministers day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year, plunging them into a gulph or abyss of ruin; when they see that Ministers at one time talk triumphantly, and call for confidence and money to march to Paris, and then again call for more confidence and more money to prevent the French from marching to London, I cannot much wonder even at their beginning to doubt of the propriety of the career of those who thus load them. Let the people of England be fairly described. Let them be called gloomy, if you please, desponding if you please; but above all things let them not be called impatient. What have they not been told that is false; what have they not suffered; and yet without any symptom of impatience? Do not, therefore, let us mock or insult them. I hope it will be shewn this night that we are determined to represent the sense they have of their own affairs, and that we will no longer confide in the Minister who has so often and so shamefully deceived them, but that, like their representatives, we will take their affairs into our own hands, and speak their general wish for the restoration of peace in the only manner in which it is likely to be effectual. I know that the people of this country have long wished for peace.—Every man, therefore, in this House who is of that opinion, should declare it this night by his vote. If you trust to the professions of the Minister, you will be deceived, as you have been. Declare your opinion to be in favour of peace, and the people of this country will not fail to keep you in countenance; they have spirit enough left, notwithstanding the attempts that have been made to deprive them of it, to enforce such a declaration, whatever the Minister may think of it. Should this House come to the declaration which is now before you, does any man, who is the representative of a county,

does

does any man, who is the representative of a manufacturing city or town, does any man who is the representative of any populous place in this kingdom, fear that his constituents will disapprove of his conduct? Do you not, on the contrary, all know that they will thank you for your conduct? Would any man in this House be ashamed or afraid to meet his constituents to-morrow, after having voted for this motion? Does any such man think that an explanation of his conduct to his constituents will be necessary? But what will they do who vote against this motion? Why, they will say that indeed they are friends to Peace; but that they did the best they could to obtain it, by leaving the subject in the hands of Executive Government. There is nothing which they will not say in order to convince the public that they are favourable to Peace; and they will be believed in their assertions, pretty much in the same manner as those are who profess to be advocates for the abolition of the Slave Trade, while they vote for its continuance. Do not let us imagine that we can deceive the public by our professions, they are too much enlightened, and they feel too much to be imposed upon by us; let us not perpetually talk of wishes for Peace; let us do something towards obtaining Peace; let us vote for Peace; [*hear! hear! hear!* resounded through the House.] Let us not content ourselves with saying we are friends to Peace; let us not trust to Ministers; that we have done much too long; but let us act for ourselves!

With regard to the particular words of this motion, perhaps had I penned it, I might have chosen other words, because I am of opinion it does not go quite far enough; but upon that score I do not see any thing material to object. I am sure that if you adopt it more will be done than you can hope to do by confiding in the Minister. It desires the King to explain the reason why negotiation has not been renewed. I am sure that is necessary in the opinion of all Europe, for the reasons hitherto assigned, have been much too equivocal. The Minister says that the French have misrepresented the conduct of our Executive Government in the late negotiation. I do not know that they have not; but an explanation will do us no harm. I believe that Lord Malmesbury was instructed to insist on the French giving up Belgium as a *sine qua non*; I believe too that such is the general opinion of Europe. The Minister is always explicit in this House no doubt, since he convinces the majority of it; but with all his command of words, it must be confessed, that, out of this
House,

House, no man is more unfortunate in his explanations. The French Directory misunderstand him, the contractors for the loan misunderstand him, the bankers misunderstand him, the lord lieutenant of Ireland misunderstands him, and even the Directors of the bank of England, who take notes of his conversation, for the express purpose of being accurate, misunderstand him. I wish, therefore, in future, that in all public affairs he would condescend to employ some other person whose knowledge of words is more upon a level with the rest of mankind than his own, in order that men of ordinary capacity may stand a chance of comprehending his meaning. I shall only add, that above all the consideration you can have in your minds this night, is the hitherto admirable, if not astonishing patience of the people of England, under all the calamities which the Minister has heaped upon them, and the duty which you owe to them, to speak their wishes for peace.

Mr. *Addington* explained.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, Sir, I had no inclination to have again risen upon the present subject, but I shall hope for the indulgence of the House while I offer a few reasons for giving my vote in favour of the order of the day. At the same time, Sir, I cannot think it necessary for me to detain the House at any considerable length, as a great many of the topics on which the honourable Gentleman has argued, have digressed from that state of the question before the House, admitted to be the real state of the question by the honourable Gentleman's own argument. Yet, Sir, even as he has put the question, he has stated it so fairly, and it rests on ground so plain and simple, that it cannot require any great compass of observation on my part, to direct the House how it ought to decide. Sir, the honourable Gentleman stated in the early part of his speech, that the question for the consideration of the House is, whether the prospect of peace was likely to be more accelerated by leaving it to Government to act in such a manner as seemed not likely to produce that effect, or whether it is proper for the previous declaration of Parliament to be given upon the subject. If this be the question, as stated by the honourable Gentleman, it is the more unnecessary for me to enter much into the particulars of it; for it appears, that however we may differ on some of the particulars of the question, on the general conclusions to be deduced from them, we are perfectly agreed. The honourable Gentleman has
taken

taken some pains to argue, that there is throughout the country a wish for peace; that there is also throughout this House a wish for peace. Sir, this is a point which the honourable Gentleman might well have spared himself the trouble of arguing; it is admitted that it must be the general wish of this House, the general and universal wish of the public, to attain so desirable an object; but, Sir, it is not the wish either of this House or of the public to procure that unqualified unconditional peace which has been hitherto held out to us. It is not, I trust, meant to be contended that it is the wish of the House, or of this country, to obtain a peace by the surrender of that, which forms the basis of our society, our honour, our good faith towards our brave ally, and our national character. The honourable Gentleman has argued, that whoever would best discharge his duty to his constituents, must vote for the motion for the address; and he asks, Who is there who would be afraid to meet his constituents, and tell them he had so voted? Sir, whether our constituents would approve all that was done by their representatives is a subject unconnected and independent of the present question. Sir, whether they wish for peace or not, makes no difference with respect to the propriety or impropriety of voting on the same side with the honourable Gentleman; but there may be this difference with regard to the effect of such a vote, namely whether it would be more likely to accelerate or retard a peace, and how far it would tend to affect that peace, by rendering the terms of it more or less favourable or unfavourable to this country. The honourable Gentleman thinks it the more likely way to promote the success of a negotiation for peace, to accede to the motion for the address. He has admitted this to be the point on which the question ought to be argued; if he has formed his opinion on good reasons, and can ascertain that the peace, either with reference to the terms or the duration of it, will be so attainable by leaving the conduct of it to the Executive Government, as by interposing the previous declaration of the House, is he not at liberty to argue in support of that opinion; but on the contrary, he has assumed it as a positive fact, that peace is most likely to be attained by the latter mode. Does the honourable Gentleman expect, that because his opinion is clear and decisive in his own mind, that he has a right to anticipate the opinion of every other member of this House? Does he think that he alone has a right to judge which is the way to obtain a particular object in

the most advantageous manner? Does he take upon himself to be such a complete representative of the people of England, that he has a right to denounce the vengeance of their constituents on those representatives who act according to their own sentiments, and in their own view of the subject, in opposition to that of the honourable Gentleman? Sir, I will tell him, that if any Gentleman was convinced that the original motion was improper, however he might fall into an offence for adopting an opinion, which, in the eyes of the honourable Gentleman must have the effect of retarding a negotiation. If there is any member of this House, who thinks we have a better chance of obtaining peace soon, by leaving the conduct of it to the discretion of the Executive Government solely, rather than to the controul of Parliament, a controul which is contrary to the fundamental principles by which such negotiations are conducted. If there is any member in this House who does not think that object so likely to be forwarded by the language of the honourable Gentleman, I nevertheless think such a member may go to his constituents, and tell them, that he has not voted contrary to the opinion of the honourable Gentleman upon slight or superficial consideration; but that he has viewed the subject, with reference to the mode by which a solid and permanent peace might be accelerated, and its effects improved; and having done so, he may justly say, on this ground, I claim the continuance of your future favour and confidence. This is the ground on which I feel every man should act, this is the ground on which I am sure every impartial member in this House will judge; Sir, if it be admitted by the Honourable Gentleman, that it is not his desire that peace should be attended with any delay, for this very reason, it becomes the less necessary for me to discuss those topics, which took up so large a portion of his speech. If he means that we should forward a peace, provided it is on admissible and honourable terms, he certainly is arguing a point which he needed not have troubled himself with, for it is universally admitted; but if his argument leads to the conclusion, that we are driven to the necessity of submitting to any terms proposed to us, though ever so arrogant, that the situation of the country is such, that there are no sacrifices which we ought not to make, then it leads to a conclusion, which I trust no one will admit the justness of. Sir, if the honourable Gentleman, by arguing on the enormous amount of our national debt, and the extent of the
losses

losses of our ally, means to bring the public mind into a temper to say, we are in such a situation that there is nothing we will not surrender; we will give up that sense of honour and faith we have hitherto preserved towards our allies; we will forego our regard for the future security of the country, the very means on which we depend for obtaining a peace likely to be permanent: we will surrender every advantage we possess at the hazard of all that can make a peace available; at the risque of the independence and security of the country. Sir, if this is the object of his argument, I do not believe that we shall ever hear such language adopted by the country in general. I trust we shall never agree to surrender at the feet of the enemy, that which is necessary to the preservation of the security of the country, and for obtaining a peace that cannot be of any duration; and I have the satisfaction of believing, that whatever may be the arguments of the honourable Gentleman there is no such sentiment in his own mind. The question comes to this point, whether the House, after what has been heard, can be of opinion a peace on admissible terms is likely to be attained sooner by the present motion. The honourable Gentleman began by saying there was no reliance to be placed on the declarations of his Majesty's Ministers, and that the declarations now made in opposition to the motion, should be no more believed than the declarations which I troubled the House with before. He stated that it might be the intention of Ministers to treat for peace in a manner similar to the negotiations last year. Now Sir, as to the terms of the former declaration, the honourable Gentleman in the first part of his speech, speaks of my declaration, as if it had wholly omitted that part of it which stated, that steps have been taken with a view of making use of the opportunity to renew the negotiations for a joint peace with the Emperor. Sir, the honourable Gentleman states, that it was told to the bank in the morning, that Mr. Hammond was to go to Vienna, and that the general object of his mission would most probably be explained in this House; and he then asks, how has it been explained? I answer, that if such a declaration is made, and the question is, whether such an explanation has been made as is satisfactory, surely it is sufficient, if it appears that the general object to attain which a person is sent, is such as appears to the persons who send him, to be most likely under all the circumstances to forward a general pacification in conjunction with his Majesty's allies. Is it not an explanation

tion which shews a certain definite object to be the result of the measure intended to be adopted. Sir, the honourable Gentleman amused himself by alluding to my power of making use of language not always perfectly intelligible; how far this is true, or how far it may or may not sometimes be the disposition of others to understand it, I will not pretend to say, but I will say it has been my endeavour, as far as my knowledge of the English language would permit, to make myself clearly understood on every occasion. How far the hon. Gentleman, who is a master of language has made himself understood, with respect to the motion being likely to promote the object which he agrees we ought to aim at, I leave to the House to determine. Sir, the next part is whether we are sending this person to the right place; and I will speak but shortly upon this subject. Is there let me ask any way of negotiating with more probability of success, than by sending a person to the very spot where that power is, whose consent and concurrence is necessary to carrying any negotiation, under the present circumstances, into effect? This is so clear, that I will not trouble the House by any endeavours to prove it. Sir, it is necessary that I state distinctly to the House, that the measure of taking steps from hence, in consequence of the separate overtures for peace by the French to the Emperor of Germany, with a view to renewing the negotiations, is a measure which was resolved on when I argued the question relative to the loan to the Emperor. It will be found, that at that very period the measure was in agitation. It perhaps may be asked why I did not at that time mention a circumstance which must certainly have had a favourable effect with respect to convincing the House of the safety of the loan to the Emperor. I answer, if it is to be made a reproach to me, that I did not argue so well as I might have done, I shall hardly think it necessary to discuss such an objection; it is true I waved an argument which I might have used with effect, but I had the good fortune to satisfy the House, my opinion was right, even without the aid of that argument; but if I had used it, I doubt much whether I should have satisfied the honourable gentleman. Sir, whoever looks to this question, whether with reference to the attainment of peace, or the continuance of war, must feel that a loan to the Emperor is a circumstance peculiarly necessary. Sir, it is in consequence of the overture to the Emperor, we have thought it necessary to renew our endeavours; and I know of no circumstance which

which is likely to counteract our endeavours to attain peace. The hon. Gentleman has stated, that the conduct of government is such that it depends on the fortuitous circumstances of chance and fortune to give it any good effect; but I have heard no proof of this, unless the assertion of the hon. Gentleman may be so called. He has stated that the terms proposed by Lord Malmesbury failed through our haughtiness; but he seems to have used this assertion merely to have an opportunity of coupling it with the invidious reflection of meanness in negotiating, when in a state of adversity, and ceasing afterwards to negotiate when the affairs of the Emperor were more prosperous. Sir, how this can be construed into an act of haughtiness or meanness, I am at a loss to determine. What is the next point? The hon. Gentleman is afraid that Ministers would not sufficiently endeavour to promote a peace, and therefore he wishes to give the negotiation the sanction of this House. But how does it appear there is any room for such an assertion? The pacific intention of government has manifestly appeared on every occasion: His Majesty's message expressly stated that he anxiously looked for the moment when a change of the disposition of the enemy would enable him to renew his negotiation for peace. The King, in his manifesto, made an authentic act in proof of this observation. He closed it with a solemn declaration to all Europe, that in spite of the haughtiness of the enemy, he was determined to renew such negotiations; but was the hope that was given by the French that such renewal was practicable? The hon. Gentleman has alluded to some expressions of mine respecting my wish that there was not a hand who would sign a request to renew the negotiations, or a courier to convey such requests. The meaning of what I said was certainly very different from the interpretation which the hon. Gentleman has put upon the words. A letter was sent by *Le Peltier* to the French Directory, by which it appeared, that if you gave out of your hands all you had, if you renounced every demand, and gave up irrevocably all you possessed, leaving yourselves afterwards at the discretion of an enemy, after you had done this, you was then to begin a treaty on the other points of collateral interest. This was the treaty which I hoped there would not be found a hand to sign. Sir, I will not detain the House by a repetition of arguments which have been so fully discussed; but I will observe, that whatever has passed respecting the negotiation for peace, is alone imputable to the

the

the haughtiness of the enemy, and no change of circumstances can alter a retrospective fact ; but I will assert, that never was the judgment of the House more supported by the general opinion of the whole nation, than with regard to the sincerity of his Majesty's Ministers in the negotiation, and that its failure was owing to the exalted pretensions of the enemy. I do not believe there is a man in the country who can entertain a doubt of your wish to promote a permanent and honourable peace with France, but whether it is right for Parliament to interfere, and determine how the negotiation for peace shall be conducted, is a point I must leave to the House to determine. The motion does not state any specific act, or what particular terms shall be adopted, it merely expresses what shall be the opinion of the House, but it does not enter into any detail.

With respect to the mode of carrying that opinion into effect, we know that peace can only be made by the Executive Power, and that for the Parliament to prescribe the terms of that peace, is not the ordinary way. I perhaps could state a motion which the hon. Gentleman would like better than the one proposed, and I should have no doubt of the sincerity of the hon. Gentleman in support of it ; but I have doubts of the sincerity of his support to the present one. Sir, this is a question relative to the terms of a separate peace ; and it is urged, that the measures to be pursued will not be done in a *bona fide* manner, if left to Ministers. There was in the honourable Gentleman's speech a slight glance at the propriety of using specific terms in the motion ; but does he mean to say that he would have this House advise his Majesty how he should act with regard to obtaining a peace, in concert with the Emperor ? Such conduct would be contrary to the principles by which negotiations have ever been carried on. As to the motion, it is no remedy for the evil complained of, and the object it desires is less intelligible than the system of argument by which it is attempted to be supported. Under these circumstances, it is for the House to judge whether the prospect of peace would be strengthened or weakened by the present motion. The hon. Gentleman says it would be strengthened, because it is right to have the general previous declaration of this House ; but is the present an ordinary period ? Certainly it is not, and therefore if in the most tranquil and ordinary period it was not thought prudent for Parliament to interpose, will not every gentleman agree that if the present crisis is extraordinary, that

that it is by so much the more important not to throw difficulties in the way of the Executive Government. If in common negotiations for peace the Parliament has not thought proper to interfere, shall it in this case interpose, because the circumstances are peculiar and extraordinary? Will it make the negotiation better? The hon. Gentleman says it is necessary to be known that Parliament wishes for a peace. Can there be a doubt of the wish for peace. It does sincerely wish for peace, but not for an unqualified and unconditional peace. I am confirmed, Sir, in my objections to the motion by the hon. Gentleman's own argument. I therefore most certainly feel it my duty to vote in favour of the motion of my hon. friend for the order of the day.

Mr. *Addington* said a few words in explanation.

Mr. *Fox* insisted that Mr. Pitt had overlooked part of his argument. The present motion, he contended, would express distinctly to all Europe that the House was sincere in its desire to negotiate.

Sir *Wm. Pulteney*, after adverting to the critical state in which the country was placed, especially with respect to the finances, observed, that there was still no reason to give way to despondency. He saw with pleasure, a rising spirit in the country, ever since the threatened invasion, which was favourable to our hopes. The people came forward and offered themselves willingly, and this object once attained, he thought there was no reason to fear an invasion. Our trade had also considerably increased. Sir William said he could not conceive how so desponding an idea could enter into any man's mind, as that we were to lie down and die. He disapproved of the motion, as proposing an impolitic interference of the House which would be prejudicial in its consequences. A vote of Parliament had, indeed, formerly produced peace with America; but our relative situation with regard to France was different. Peace with America did not afterwards endanger the safety of this country; but now we were contending with a great neighbouring and rival nation; with a power stretching its conquests on every side, and with a marked animosity towards this country. What, he asked, would peace signify without security? or plenty of money, if an enemy were at the door? Every danger ought to be risked, and every sacrifice made, consistent with our safety and independence, and for the sake of obtaining security. He deprecated the idea "of a peace on any terms;" and declared, that if France was permitted to retain Belgium,
and

and its influence over Holland, Britain could not be secure. Comparing France with Britain and Ireland in its population and resources, Sir William said that our chief defence consisted in our navy, and our security in our being separated from the Continent, and France being destitute of any other capacious harbours on the opposite coast besides Brest. France was so sensible of this, that it had made the greatest exertions, and been at a vast expence in endeavouring to get one single harbour in the channel (Cherburgh) fit for the reception of men of war: but if they got such an addition of coast and harbours as Belgium afforded, our situation must be very insecure. He really believed that Ministers were extremely desirous of obtaining peace, but feared lest an over-earnest desire of obtaining this blessing, discovered by the House or the country at large, would only tend to retard, if not defeat the object. He dreaded the consequence of leaving the Emperor in the power of France. If he had met with disasters, the more pressing for this country to say, "here is more money for you." He ridiculed the idea of conciliating France, by the House adopting such a motion as this. France, he had no doubt, would be equally willing to treat with any Minister who would surrender to it the valuable interests of this country. The grand object which France aimed at, was to keep England in chains. He asked, whether the ancient and daring spirit of this country was fled, or whether there was any sufficient reason to sink under our present difficulties? He added, that to tie Ministers down to the necessity of making peace on any terms with the enemy, was, in his opinion, perfect wildness; he should therefore oppose the present question before the House, as one of a very dangerous tendency. This, in his opinion, was the moment for the Chancellor to come and propose a loan to the Emperor, for if he should be left to make bad terms of peace for himself, it would be, in its consequences, equally bad for this country.

Colonel Fullarton said, with respect to pacification, which the honourable Gentleman has so ably and truly urged as a desirable object, he will probably not find a dissenting voice from Dover to the Orkneys. But with respect to the mode how, or the time when, that benefit may be procured, with respect to the *quomodo*, and the *quando*, on that point he will find *tot homines, quot sententiæ*. For his part, his mind could hardly figure a more unpropitious moment than the present.

In

In the first place, considering the actual state of Great Britain and Ireland, it certainly appears, that any repetition of ambassadorial mission, or the diplomatique advances on the part of his Majesty to the Directory or Cabinet of France, could only tend to expose his Majesty's Councils, to have their proposals again rejected.

When we strip this question of all diplomatique ambiguity, it stands actually thus:—Is this country prepared to admit, that Belgium shall not be restored to the Emperor, and that the Rhine shall be the boundary of France, if you say, aye, then undoubtedly you may obtain terms of accommodation; but if you say, No, then the French will answer, come and take Belgium, come and drive us from the Rhine. There again the *quomodo* interposes obstacles, which all the diplomatique powers of Lord Malmesbury cannot obviate; nor can they be obviated, unless Mr. Benjamin Garlike, or some other of our diplomatique operators, can prevail on his Prussian Majesty to bring against the French, what in the Civil law is called—*Actio finium regundorum*.

But before Benjamin Garlike, or Lord Malmesbury receive any new credentials, there are preliminaries respecting the *status quo*: not the *status quo ante bellum*, but the *status quo* before the stoppage of our national circulation, which remains to be adjusted, with a much more despotic and difficult Directory than that of France, I mean the *imperium in imperio*, commonly called the Directors of the Bank of England. We have often heard of Governments overturned by Aristocracies and Mobocracies, and Clubocracies, but now it is Bankocracy that threatens the destruction of social order in this country. It is Bankocracy that turns and overturns all questions respecting war, negociation, and peace, and which, if not prevented by the vigorous and able interposition of a distinguished Baronet (Sir W. Pulteney), will infallibly overturn this Government.

Before we talk, therefore, of renewing negociations with Mr. De la Croix, it is necessary to ascertain the *status quo* with Mr. Giles; it is necessary to restore the credit, confidence, and circulation of this country. It is necessary to obtain the means of rendering this country impervious in defence, invincible in finance. Until these great and important preliminaries are compleatly ratified, any overtures, or tendency to negociation with France, would not only be premature, but pernicious.

When those great objects were accomplished, whenever

the time shall come, that the question of overtures and accommodation can be discussed without impropriety, he said, he would be ready fully and fairly to state what he conceived to be the only practicable mode of obtaining reasonable terms of peace. In the mean time, he should only say, that some of the negociators who have hitherto been employed on the part of this country, have afforded very ample negative instructions respecting those things which ought to be avoided, if our object is, that negotiation should terminate in pacification. He trusted, whenever it should please his Majesty to renew negociations, they would be conducted in a very different spirit from the unconciliatory temper, and offensive manners with which our diplomatique intercourse had been on different occasions conducted on the Continent.

These are not times for entrusting the most important interests of the country to plenipotentiaries, who intrench themselves behind the ramparts of etiquette, and stalk on the stilts of ambassadorial mightiness; while, at the same time, they are so bandaged and swaddled in the formalities of diplomatism, that if M. Delacroix were to ask him what o'clock it is, they would hardly know how to give him a direct answer, without sending exprefs to England to consult the minute hand at St. James's.

There is another point, to which it may not be irrelevant to refer prospectively on this business; undoubtedly every returning sentiment of amity and mutual forbearance ought to be encouraged by every practicable mode. Perhaps, with this view, no better beacon or directory can be found in the annals of negociation, than the conduct of our Indian Government in the year 1781, when French, Dutch, Mysoreans, and Mahrattas, were all in arms against the English; and our interests in the East were, if possible, more unprosperous than they are at present on the Continent of Europe. An honourable Baronet, now a member of this House, then second in Council, and afterwards Governor General in India, in conjunction with Lord Macartney and Sir Eyre Coote intimated to the Mahrattas, that unless, in so far as might be necessary to support existing engagements with allies, the English Government was determined that their operations against the Mahrattas should be naval, and defensive merely. This they intimated to the Poona Government, and from that moment not a shot was fired between the Mahrattas and the English. There is one other point, which
must

must not be omitted. It is well known, that the French, from the commencement of the war, have resisted all ideas of treating collectively with the confederated powers: in so doing, they have proved their wisdom: for by treating individually, they have detached every power from the confederacy excepting Austria and England. If the French lose all hopes of detaching these powers from each other, they can no longer have the same object left for persisting in that policy; at least, it may no longer be impracticable to devise means for bringing them to treat on general principles, and collective arrangements. This can hardly be effected without a congress in some form or other. Under this impression, he would take the liberty of reading such a form of resolutions, as he conceived would meet the object in view; not meaning, however, at all to press them on the House at present.

“Resolved, That it is the opinion of the House, that whenever a proper opportunity occurs, the most eligible mode of establishing the tranquillity of Europe on a secure foundation will be, by assembling a general congress, such as took place last century previous to the peace of Munster. That the object of this congress ought to be, to specify and declare to all mankind the principles of right and wrong, which ought to govern the relations between independent states, to specify and declare to all mankind the principles of security, property, and public credit, which it is necessary to recognise and render effectual, before any pacification can be negotiated with stability or honour.

“In the event of the belligerent powers not acceding to this opinion, it will become the House to make known the grounds on which the war is continued, to ascertain the form in which it is to be conducted, and to declare the principles on which a cessation of hostilities ought to be concluded on the part of his Britannic Majesty.”

Sir *John Macpherson* said, having seconded the motion, he should now state the reasons which had induced him to give it his support. He imagined it to be of such a nature that it could not fail of being agreeable to the side of the House on which he stood, and he was convinced that it would meet the approbation of the opposite side. This nation, and every nation of Europe, suffered vast calamities in consequence of the continuance of the war; and the unanimity of the House on the present occasion would be the greatest of blessings. The House, he thought, had forgot the terms of the motion, or there could not have been so much difference of opinion. It only went to this point, to exculpate that House from any participation in the insincerity

which had been said to prevail in the late negotiation for peace, and to facilitate any negotiation which Ministers might undertake hereafter. He did hope that if the House was not *quite* unanimous on a question of so much importance, they would at least shew some small degree of unanimity [some laughter.] Sir John said he was glad he was able to make the House so merry. He had only endeavoured to explain his reasons for supporting a motion which he thought might prove of the greatest utility to the country. It would shew that this country was fighting for its rights and liberties, and that we were not the aggressors. It went no farther than to advise his Majesty to negotiate upon the grounds on which the war was originally undertaken. It was evident that the French renounced the extravagant system upon which they acted in the commencement of the war, by the enquiry which the legislative body of that country had instituted respecting the felons landed in Wales, and he hoped to have seen a similar spirit of enquiry animate that House.

Mr. *Johns* craved from the House the same indulgence which he had experienced upon a former occasion. No man wished more anxiously for peace than he did himself; but he was for a peace founded upon the balance of power, and the general security of Europe. Peace might be made as unguardedly as war, and he thought the adoption of the present motion was calculated to place the restoration of that blessing at a greater distance than if it were left entirely to his Majesty's Ministers. Our Ambassador had been dismissed in such an insulting manner from Paris, that for his part he would never propose the renewing of a negotiation with the same persons. This was not the time to appear ready to submit to any terms. In the present critical situation of the country the House ought not to fetter the Executive Government, but leave them to take advantage of such circumstances as might occur. We had to contend with an enemy who had destroyed or enslaved every regular Government within their reach. This country was contending for all that was valuable in society, for expiring humanity, for the present generation, and for posterity.—“We fight,” said he, “for our God and for our king. If we hesitate, we are gone for ever, and with us will expire the whole of the civilized world.” These were his opinions, and upon these grounds he would vote against the original motion, and every motion of a similar tendency.

Mr. *Greene* said a few words in support of the original motion.

Mr.

Mr. *Weston* said, that upon all occasions he had opposed the present unfortunate war. In the present instance he should vote against the order of the day, with the view, if the original motion was carried, of moving an amendment upon it. The amendment he intended to propose, he thought, would be better calculated to produce the effect his honourable friend wanted than the motion seemed to be in the state he had submitted it to the House.

Mr. *Pollen* replied.

Mr. *Martin* proposed that the original motion should be withdrawn.

The House divided upon the question of the order of the day :

<i>Ayes,</i>	—	—	—	291
<i>Noes,</i>	—	—	—	85
<i>Majority.</i>				206

After the division, Mr. *Pitt* moved, “ that the House do now adjourn to Thursday se’nnight.”

A debate arose on this motion. It was opposed by Mr. *Grey* and Mr. *Fox*, on the ground that the report of the Secret Committee on the state of the finances, would be ready to be made on Thursday next.

Mr. *Pitt* said, if it was certain that the report would be ready on Thursday next, he should not move the adjournment until that day ; but as its being ready was merely a matter of expectation, he did not think there was any reason for opposing the motion.—Mr. *Pitt*’s motion was agreed to.

It was then ordered that the House should resolve into a Committee of Supply on Friday se’nnight, and it was settled that the report of the Secret Committee, should be read on the Monday following.

Adjourned to Thursday se’nnight.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *April 20.*

A new writ was ordered for a commissioner to serve in Parliament for the county of Dunbarton, in the room of William Cunningham Bontine, Esq. who has accepted of the Chiltern Hundreds.

Mr. *Wilberforce Bird* having obtained leave by motion, brought in a bill to explain and amend an act of this session
of

of Parliament, for regulating two acts of his present Majesty, restraining the negociation of Promissory notes and Bills of Exchange, &c.—The bill was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

Mr. *Abbot* brought up a Supplementary appendix to the report of the Committee of Finance, which was ordered to be laid on the table, and to be printed.

Adjourned.

FRIDAY, *April 21.*

Mr. *Bragge* brought up the third report of the Committee of Secrecy appointed to enquire into the causes which produced the Order in Council prohibiting the Bank from issuing specie in payment of their notes, which was ordered to be printed.

Mr. *Abbot* brought up the second report of the Committee of Public Finances, which was also ordered to be printed.

The bill for explaining and amending the act for suspending the 16th and 17th of George the Second was read a second time.

On the motion of Mr. *Hobart*, a Committee was appointed upon the expiring laws, with instructions to report thereupon to the House.

The Irish Loan bill was read a third time and passed.

The Committee of Supply was deferred till Monday.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* postponed his motion upon Finance from Monday to Wednesday. As there were two election ballots standing for Tuesday, and as it might happen that they might not make a House on that day, which would of course retard the financial discussion which he had given notice that he should bring forward on Wednesday, he proposed that these ballots should be put off till Friday, which was the day after that on which the House was ordered to be called over.—The orders for hearing the petitions against the elections for the county of Kent, and the city of Canterbury, were accordingly discharged from Tuesday and fixed for Friday.

The order also for hearing the petition against the election for the Borough of Maidstone, was discharged from Thursday and fixed for Friday.

The Committee of Ways and Means was deferred till Monday. Adjourned.

HOUSE

HOUSE OF LORDS.

MONDAY, *April 24.*

The royal assent was given by commission to several public and private acts.

Received from the Commons several bills, which were read a first time.

INTERESTING PUBLIC EVENTS.

The Duke of *Grafton* called the attention of the House to the state of public affairs, which appeared to him to be alarming, and the more so because his Majesty's Ministers did not make any communication to their Lordships that day. There were three points on which he wished to be informed in an authentic manner, and on which he had hitherto no information, except what appeared in newspapers, and what he had heard as mere rumour from his acquaintance. The first was, that the Emperor had negotiated, or was negotiating, a separate peace. The next was, that Ireland was in a state of insurrection in many parts of it; and the last was, that the fleet at Portsmouth was in a state in which no obedience was paid to the commands of the officers. These were points of the most serious importance to this country, and he lamented most sincerely that there was not in the House that day, after so considerable a recess, one Minister to give their Lordships information. He had entertained hopes, before he came to the House, that after what had happened, Ministers would have advised his Majesty to make a communication on all, or some of these important points. The most pleasing would be that there was no foundation in any of the rumours upon either of the subjects; but if there was any foundation for any of them, their Lordships ought to be in possession of some facts, and they should be laid before them in such an authentic manner, as that they could regularly deliberate upon them, and proceed upon them in discharge of the duty they owed to the State. But by neglecting to give the necessary information in these important particulars, and in this critical time, Ministers sanctioned, as far as they could sanction, the aspersions which had been cast on the dignity of the House, and encouraged evil-disposed persons to repeat, that their Lordships met in that House merely for the purpose of forming a Court, as it were, to enregister the Decrees or Edicts of the Executive Government. It was to refute such slander that he wished
for

for the information which he was now seeking. Should their Lordships suffer public affairs to be conducted by Ministers as they pleased, and withhold information, however important and necessary, as long as they pleased, that House and its proceedings would soon, he feared, sink into public contempt. He therefore could not help expressing a hope that some information would be given without delay upon these important subjects.

The *Lord Chancellor* said he did not question the sincerity of the noble Duke in desiring information upon the matters to which he had alluded, and which were as important as the noble Duke had stated them to be. He could not give all the information that was called for. But he could state, that as to Ireland, he knew of nothing of any important nature that had occurred since the last authentic account with which their Lordships were already acquainted. That with respect to affairs on the Continent, a mail had within a few hours of the moment he was speaking, arrived. The contents of which their Lordships would readily see, from the nature of the thing, he could not now be prepared to communicate to their Lordships in any way whatever; and the late arrival of which was the cause of the absence of his Majesty's Ministers. With regard to the fleet at Portsmouth, he was happy to have it in his power to say, that the sailors had all of them returned to the regular and ordinary discharge of their duty; a communication upon which would soon be made to the House, perhaps in the shape which the noble Duke himself desired.

After a few words from the Duke of *Grafton* upon the necessity of a speedy and ample communication, the House proceeded to private business.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, April 24.

The Speaker communicated to the House the answer of Sir John Jervis to his letter, notifying the thanks of the House.

Sir *John Sinclair* moved that the Select Committee, appointed to consider the state of the waste, commonable, and improveable lands, should have power to report.—Agreed to.

The House went into a Committee of the whole House on Mr. Wilberforce Bird's bill, to explain the act allowing

ing the issue of small promissory notes. The duration of the bill was limited to the 8th of July next, instead of the 1st of May.

The House being resumed, the report was received.

The Maidstone election ballot was put off from Friday to Tuesday the 9th of May.

The Canterbury election ballot was put off from Friday to Tuesday the 2d of May.

MUTINY AT PORTSMOUTH.

Mr. *Fox* said he rose to enquire of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when it was his intention to communicate information to the House relative to certain very important transactions which had lately taken place at Portsmouth, and which had attracted so much attention. Of these he knew no more than what the public papers contained; but it was a subject upon which the House ought to receive, as soon as possible, the fullest information.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that the question had anticipated his intention of intimating to the House that some information upon this subject would very speedily be communicated to the House.—At present however, he had no commands to make that communication now. Owing to the distance from Portsmouth it was impossible to say when circumstances would allow the whole of the subject to be laid before the House, but certainly it would take place early, and he should, as soon as possible, give notice of the precise day.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* moved, that the first report of the Committee of Finance, and various other papers, should be referred to the Committee of Supply.

The House then resolved itself into a Committee of Supply.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, it was not his intention to anticipate the discussion upon the subject of the finances, which would take place on Wednesday; all that he meant, at present, was to state the three general branches of supply which he proposed to vote. The first point was an additional sum to prevent the encrease of navy debt in the current year.—The second regarded the growing produce of the consolidated fund, and the charges upon it not provided for, and for meeting such outstanding charges on services as might be found to exist. That which related to the navy would be found to be the largest, without taking into view any

thing more than what had been usual formerly to provide. Seven millions six hundred thousand pounds had already been voted. A farther sum of five millions would be wanted, over and above this sum of seven millions, so that the whole of the charge on this article would amount to about twelve millions, being nearly the sum stated in the report of finance. The five millions he proposed to be voted now were instead of the two millions and a half which had been formerly stated. The details upon the whole of the subjects he should reserve till a future occasion. He then moved his first resolution, "That a sum, not exceeding five millions, should be granted to his Majesty to prevent the increase on the navy debt," which was agreed to.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* then moved, "That a sum, not exceeding 1,110,000*l.* should be granted to his Majesty, to pay off the sums raised by Exchequer bills to that amount voted last year.

"That a sum, not exceeding 1,177,000*l.* be granted to his Majesty, to make good the charges on the consolidated fund" which were put and agreed to.

Several other resolutions for lesser sums were then put and agreed to. The House was resumed, and the report ordered to be received the next day.

Mr. *Ryder* moved, that certain acts relative to the importation of manufactures from the Levant and Mediterranean should be read; and moved, that the House should resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to take them into consideration the next day.

The Corporation Causes Bill was deferred to this day se'n-night.

The other orders of the day were likewise deferred.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, *April 25.*

Heard counsel in a Committee of Privileges for the Earl of Errol, respondent, against the Earl of Lauderdale's Petition.

Several Bills were brought up from the House of Commons.

The *Lord Chancellor* communicated to the House the answer of Sir John Jervis to his letter, notifying the thanks of the House. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, *April 25.*

The Promissory Note Bill was read a third time, and passed.
Mr.

Mr. *Windham* brought up a paper from the War Office, which was ordered to lie upon the table.

In a Committee of the whole House it was moved, that an allowance be granted for goods imported from the Levant in British or foreign vessels; and that the Chairman be directed to move the House for leave to bring in a Bill pursuant thereto.

The House resolved itself into a Committee on the Navigation acts, and the report was ordered for Monday.

The report of the Committee of Supply was agreed to by the House. The following are the sums voted.

l.	s.	d.	
796	19	6	for money for Sir John Farhill, Secretary to the Commissioners for the reduction of the national debt.
110	0	0	to the Clerk for American claims.
31,000	0	0	for French clergy and laity.
3,933	0	0	for supporting convicts on the Thames.
9,628	12	6	for supporting convicts at Langston and Portsmouth.
4,515	8	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	for repairs of the Fleet Prison
5,672	3	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	for repairs of the King's Bench.
1,461	15	6	for prosecutions relating to corn.
2,806	8	0	for money issued for the prosecutions against Mr. Hastings.
693	15	0	for the salary of the Chief Justice of Newfoundland.
31,825	14	1	for money issued for New South Wales, and not provided for.
1,740	9	0	for expences and allowances under the alien act.
13,000	0	0	for support of the African forts and settlements.
3,000	0	0	for the Board of Agriculture.
1,345	0	0	for certain secret services between the 10th of October 1796 and 10th of Jan. 1797.
1,800	0	0	for extraordinary expences relating to prosecutions respecting the corn.
32,000	0	0	for maintenance and employment of convicts at home, for 1797.
7,000	0	0	for printing journals, votes, reports, and papers, for 1797.
2,000	0	0	for superintending the alien act for 1797.
30,000	0	0	for New South Wales for 1797.
46,120	0	0	for American sufferers for 1797.

Mr. *Grey* moved, that there be laid before the House an account of all the bills-from Dominica, paid by the Treasury, prior to the 25th of December 1796, and all the bills that have since appeared at the Treasury.

Mr. *Long* moved, that there be laid before the House an estimate of the navy debt, as it stood on the 31st of December 1796.

Leave was given to bring in a Bill to enable the East India Company to pay two regiments of volunteers for the protection of the East India Company's warehouses, and for the protection of the kingdom.

A person from the Navy Office brought up an account of the debt as it stood on the 31st of December 1796.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, *April 26.*

The call of the House was deferred till Monday se'nnight.

Mr. *Mainwaring* moved for the second reading of the Bill to empower the Justices of the Peace in the county of Middlesex to make a more equal county rate.

The Marquis of *Titchfield* objected to the Bill, because the parish quotas had been settled 60 years ago by Parliament, according to the ancient contributions, and persons who had since made purchases would be sufferers thereby.

Major *Metcalf* thought the Bill required deliberation, and thought that every county would have a right to expect a similar assessment, if it passed. He therefore moved, by way of amendment, that the Bill should be read a second time on that day three months.

Mr. *Mainwaring* said, he had hoped to have the Bill read a second time, and afterwards discussed. He conceived a more fair rate to be extremely necessary; and if, by the statute of the 12th of George II. the ancient contributions enacted by the 4th of William and Queen Mary were preserved, it was because the parishes were all equally assessed then in proportion, and because the legislature did not at that time think the wording of the act could afterwards work such monstrous injustice as it had done. In 1739 the county rate was only 800*l.* per annum. It afterwards rose to 1,200*l.* and it had risen to the enormous amount of 15,000*l.* per annum. In the mean time the rental of the Strand was no more than 70,000*l.* per annum, out of which it contributed the yearly sum of 215*l.* to the county rate, while the rental of Mary-le-bonne was 320,000*l.* per annum, out of which it contributed no more than 54*l.* whereas, according to an equal proportion between the rental and the rate, the parish of Mary-le-bonne ought to contribute more than four times that sum, while the Strand should pay no more than 40*l.* per annum. The same sort of argument applied to the parishes of Spitalfields and Shoreditch, where numbers of industrious poor people are compelled to contribute with difficulty a larger portion to the county rate than parishes where scarcely any but the rich and the idle have their residence. As to the objection, that every county would have a right to expect a similar assessment if this Bill passed, he denied the fact, because other counties are not liable to incur the same encreasing expences. The prosecution of felons in the county of Middlesex is attended with an additional expence to that of other counties; and to such an amount do these expences some-
times

times rise, that, in a recent trial of two persons for forgery, the prosecution cost no less a sum than 666l. 18s. 6d. Now as the large parish of Marybone must be more instrumental in causing these expences than smaller parishes, it was but just it should contribute a proportion. The expence of building a House of Correction had also encreased the county rate in the sum of 20,000l. to which was to be added the yearly expences attending it of 1000l. and to this also was to be added the expence of building a new prison in Clerkenwell, for which the sum of 60,000l. was borrowed at an interest, including the other expences attending it, of 3000l. per annum. All these expences had been incurred since the passing of the act, none of which the legislature could possibly foresee. To shew further how extremely hard the present rate bore upon some of the smaller parishes inhabited by the poorer classes of people, he stated that, by a dreadful fire in Radcliffe two or three years ago, the greater part of the houses in the parish were consumed, together with the property of the inhabitants, and consequently they were no longer able to contribute to the county rate: yet, according to the letter of the law, the Magistrates of Middlesex might have distrained the goods and chattels of the overseers for the payment of it, which was a species of humanity he did not expect to hear of, even from the parish of Mary-le-bonne. To conclude, he contended, that if the Bill did pass, the parish of Mary-le-bonne would not have a great deal to complain of, as an equal county rate would not assess it more, in addition to the trifle which it now contributes, than one penny in the pound.

The *Solicitor General* and the *Master of the Rolls* both spoke in favour of the Bill, after which the House divided.

<i>Ayes</i> (for the second reading)	82
<i>Noes</i> (for the postponement)	71

Majority 11

It was then moved, that it be read on Wednesday se'nnight, and carried on a division of 80 to 77.

Mr. *Rose* moved, that the following accounts be laid before the House, preparatory to the opening of the Budget, which were ordered, and immediately presented:

An account of the produce of the consolidated duties of the stamp revenues, from the 5th of April 1795 to the 5th of April 1796.

An account of the produce of the duties of 1 per cent. upon sums insured on property consumed by fire.

An account of the produce of the duties upon bills of exchange.

An account of the produce of duties on wrought silver and gold plate.

And an account of the produce of duties on solicitors' and attornies' certificates.

Mr.

Mr. *St. John* took this opportunity to give notice of a motion he intended to bring forward next Friday se'nnight, of which he had formerly made mention, and in order to do which he moved,

"For an account of the deaths and casualties in the British forces, or which have happened in the forces under British pay, in the island of St. Domingo, from the commencement of the war to the latest period in which the accounts can be made up."

Mr. *Dundas* objected, because the honourable Gentleman must see that such accounts were never made in a time of war.

Mr. *Grey* thought there could be no objection, as he understood his honourable friend did not mean to enquire into the strength of the garrison, but merely to move for a return of the killed, dead, and missing.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* explained, stating, that he should have no objection to laying the returns before the House, as far as he was able, which would be somewhere up to six months previous to the present period.

Mr. *St. John* amended his motion, by moving for the returns up to the 30th of September, which was read and agreed to. He then moved for accounts of the civil establishment of that part of the island of St. Domingo belonging to Great Britain, certifying the names of the officers and the salaries annexed, together with an account of the return of the deaths and casualties in the navy, upon that station, from the commencement of the war to the 30th of September 1796, which were ordered.

General *Walpole* renewed his notice of a motion respecting the Maroon war, and, in order to bring it forward, moved,

"That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to order a copy of the printed Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, relative to the war with the Maroons, to be laid before the House, together with a copy of the Observations made by Major-General Walpole, and a copy of the Correspondence between Major-General Wentworth and the Governor of Jamaica.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* objected to the latter motion, because the correspondence was of a familiar nature, and, as he thought, not of any use for the object of the honourable General's motion. Though familiar letters might sometimes accidentally come into the recognition of office, he did not therefore think they ought to be made public without the mutual consent of the parties they belonged to.

General *Walpole* replied, that as they had already been produced and acted upon in the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, he conceived they ought not to be refused.

Mr.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* stated, that none but the printed correspondence had been produced and acted upon in the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, and that was included in the former motion.

Mr. *St. John* withdrew the latter motion. The former was previously read and agreed to, and the accounts ordered.

BUDGET.

The order of the day was then read, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Ways and Means,

Mr. *Sylvester Douglas* in the chair.

The report of the Select Committee of Finance being previously referred to the said Committee,

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*. "In the great and extensive prosecution of the business which it is my duty this day to submit to the consideration of the Committee, it is impossible for me not to feel the weight and importance of the burthens which our exigencies have occasioned, and still less is it impossible for me not to feel considerable regret, and great personal disappointment in being compelled, however reluctantly, to propose an addition to the ample and large provision already made towards defraying the expences of the country in a wide and calamitous war, and increase the present burthens which are borne with unexampled patience, and to which nothing but the most rigorous necessity could force me to add fresh burthens. I am conscious the sensations of every gentleman in the Committee will be hurt on this occasion, and I trust, whatever may be their feelings upon this subject, they will give me credit my sensations are not less alive. But it is not my duty to dwell on those sensations.—Much as I regret the causes of the war, and the calamities with which it has been attended; much as I regret the manner in which the hope of a speedy termination has been obstructed, and additional expences thereby incurred; much as I regret increasing expences, where expences have already been so much and almost so insufferably increased; and whatever may be my own personal mortification and regret in being obliged to come forward at such a distressful period with new burthens; I feel it, notwithstanding, to be my first great duty, as I hope and trust the House and country will do with me, with a firm and manly spirit, to convince the enemy that however great may be our pressure, however embarrassed our circumstances, we are determined to contend with them as long as we are able, rather than submit to haughty and dishonourable terms. Though we may not be successful enough to accomplish the means by
which

which we can terminate the fatal contest in which we are engaged, consistently with the honour, security, and permanent and essential interests of the nation, let us yet convince our enemies, that our spirit does not desert us in our trials, but that, in spite of every difficulty, we will still be just both to ourselves and to our country. In this sentiment I trust to meet the sense of the House and the people at large, whose patriotism, justice, and magnanimity, as they never have failed in the most arduous conflicts, will not, I trust, fail now; but manifest, on the contrary, that whatever may be the event, they have but one duty to pursue, viz. to secure and preserve the safety, honour, and happiness of the kingdom. Without hesitation, though certainly not without anxiety and regret, I shall now proceed to submit to the Committee what I have to propose.

In doing this, it is with pleasure I declare, that I shall not only derive great advantage, but that my labour is materially diminished also by the very able and impartial statements of the first report of the Select Committee of Finance, which has been printed and this day laid before you. However, in particular parts, I may be justified in differing from these statements, however favourable those statements may be to the general wishes of the House and of the country (and I am ready to confess they are more favourable than what I have to propose) I shall guide myself by their direction, and render that report the basis of the plan of my proposal. I shall follow the usual mode of proceeding upon subjects of this nature, and first take a view of the transactions which have caused the expences for which we are now called on to provide, and state what sums remain to be provided for; I shall then compare these provisional demands with what have been already provided for in the course of the present year, and submit the plans which I propose for a further provision, and in this process I shall be as short and explicit as I can. For this purpose, therefore, and according to the usual practice, I shall first call the attention of the House to the whole amount of services for the present year, with the amount of the sums already voted for defraying them, and the amount of the sums remaining to be voted; and after that I shall detail the Ways and Means by which these services have already been defrayed, and by which the remainder may be defrayed; and finally I shall state the specific measures which I mean to ground upon those statements towards the provision for the accumulated interest and charges. For the sake of
being

being clear and intelligible, I shall proceed article by article, under various heads; and, to pursue the customary mode, I shall of course begin with the

NAVY.

The Committee will recollect, that for the Naval service of the current year, there has been already voted the sum of 7,661,000*l.* in addition to which the Committee of Supply has voted 5,000,000*l.* more. - Gentlemen will recollect, that although I estimated the expences of the Naval department at 7,661,000*l.* I then stated my intention to propose the provision of a further sum of 2,500,000*l.* in order to remedy an inconvenience which heretofore had arisen, and thereby have 10,161,000*l.* in cash towards defraying any excess of Navy debt. Such, however, have been the extraordinary exertions and expences of the war, that there yet remained an unfunded debt of the Navy unprovided for to the amount of four millions. In the statements of the Select Committee a comparison has been given between this outstanding Navy debt and the outstanding Navy debt in 1783, and the Committee has made an allowance for 3,000,000*l.* In the reports of the Select Committee it appears by the best estimates, that as far as they can be ascertained, the expences for the Navy service would amount to 12,000,000*l.* which is short of what I have stated them to be, but exceeding what I formerly considered them. By way of reducing this amount, though I ought to state that a sum of 800,000*l.* went in aid of the Navy services of 1796, and consequently left the provision for the services of 1797 deficient in that sum, for, however, careful we may be, a part of the expences will be carried on in Navy bills, though certainly to less extent than formerly. In the provision of 12,000,000 four shillings per month would be carried to the ordinary expences of the Navy, whereby about 110,000*l.* would be taken away from the unfunded debt. As I suppose there will then be a million, or a million and a half of Navy debt afloat. Such was my former statement, and compared with the statement of the Committee, there is this difference, that it supposes 1,500,000*l.* of floating Navy debt, instead of 3,000,000*l.* as the Select Committee of Finance has calculated. I do not know whether I have expressed myself clearly upon this point; but if not, I shall be happy to give any gentleman a further explanation.

ARMY.

The next head of service is the army, upon which there has

been already voted the sum of 10,913,000*l.* The accounts for foreign corps are not yet made out, but they soon will be, and I have reason to hope their expences will be less than were calculated in my original statement, and less than they appeared to the Select Committee. I have reason to think this diminution will amount to one half, and that the sum of 370,000*l.* will be sufficient; 6,000,000*l.* was the total amount estimated for the Army establishment, independent of the extraordinaries, which is less by 297,000*l.* than the estimates for the ensuing year by the Select Committee. In 1796 there were some extraordinary expences of the army incurred which at present remain unprovided for, to the amount of 3,287,000*l.* and in the interval of the 8th of December and the 1st of January, there was another outstanding demand made evident of 100,000*l.* which, in consequence of not being paid, is to be added to the other, and makes a sum of 3,387,000*l.* out-standing army debt to be provided for. It appears by the report of the Select Committee, moreover, that by Treasury bills paid at the Bank, and warrants for army service due and unpaid, a further sum of 2,081,000*l.* remains to be provided for, inasmuch as Treasury bills paid at the Bank previous to the 5th of January 1797, and those which were due on the 8th of January, but not included, amounted to 1,660,000*l.* to which were to be added 428,000*l.* for Army warrants. So that the sum total would be as before stated 2,088,000*l.* The estimated sum to be incurred by the Army extraordinaries for 1797, according to the report of the Secret Committee, and for the amount of which it is my intention to provide, is 4,000,000*l.* It was not proposed before Christmas to raise any sum of money for this head of service, but so far as any calculation to the latest possible period could be made, the calculation nearly tallied with that sum. It is here to be observed, that the extraordinaries of the army are now, for the first time, brought forward by way of estimate, at least they were never done so fully till the present war, but they were paid out of the money granted for other services, leaving the provision for those services deficient to another year. In addition to this, there has been advanced to the Emperor, by way of loan, and which will be due to the public 1,200,000*l.* and a sum of 900,000*l.* advanced to the merchants of Grenada and St. Vincents, which will also be returned. There are further advances to the Emperor to be set against the expence of extraordinaries to a very large amount, for which it will not be necessary to provide a present fund, though I set them down

as

as so much credit against so much debt. The Treasury bills and Army warrants at home, did not go to the extent of 2,088,000*l.* but there were bills from remote parts, notwithstanding the precautions I had taken to calculate and curtail the expences abroad as much as possible, which exceeded what was formerly thought upon estimate to be their utmost amount. This might in part be owing to the unforeseen and incalculable operations of the war; however, I did not think it consistent to leave them to rest on distant means of payment, and I chose accordingly to propose for their provision. This comprises all under the head of the Army.

ORDNANCE.

I now come to the Ordnance department, for which there has been already voted the sum of 1,623,000*l.* and to which I do not mean to propose any addition. I must observe, however, that since the estimates were made, a demand of 300,000*l.* to pay debentures for stores supplied and services performed, has since come in for part of the Ordnance expences in the same manner as the Treasury bills of 1,600,000*l.* of which I did not then know. To this deficiency may be added another in the barrack department, in which an outstanding debt remains, not merely for the building of barracks, but for the expences of provision and accommodation, in which the soldiers would have been furnished to the amount of the same charge upon the public if they had not been garrisoned in barracks, but had been quartered elsewhere. I mention this to remove any prejudice which might perhaps have otherwise been indulged, and shall conclude this article by recommending the provision advised by the Select Committee of 717,000*l.* which in the present view of this subject will defray the whole demands. I have now proceeded through the Navy, Army, and Ordnance, in which I do not recollect to have omitted any extraordinary items, except that I have not mentioned a specific additional sum, which I mean to propose for the further relief of his Imperial Majesty in the present critical period, and the particular statement of which I have reserved to a separate discussion. As early as practicable, that subject shall be submitted to the consideration of the Committee; but however important it may appear, it is not expedient with my arrangement to enter on it at present.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICE.

The next branch of the supplies is for defraying the expences

pences of what is called the Miscellaneous Service, which includes the expences of plantations, convicts, &c. For this there has been already voted the sum of 378,000*l.* and if I proceed by the estimates of the Select Committee, a further sum of 929,000*l.* will be found necessary. In this sum 400,000*l.* is comprised for making provision before hand for articles which it has been usual to pay in the first instance out of the Civil List, and to propose afterwards to Parliament to vote a sum sufficient to repay what has been so advanced. Under this statement, I have not included the provision of any sum which the important domestic happiness of the royal family, and the accustomed feelings of the country have allowed as the usual portion with any of the female branches. That provision will come better perhaps hereafter under a distinct and specific proposition. There is, however a sum of 600,000*l.* included, which is proposed to be lent to the suffering Grenada merchants over and above the sums which I before stated, and which are to be ultimately repaid; but I took occasion to include them in my statement of the actual expenditure, because they are sums for which I find it necessary to provide a temporary provision.

NATIONAL DEBT.

The next article of supply is the annual provision for the discharge of the National debt of 200,000*l.*

DEFICIENCIES OF LAND AND MALT.

To this is to be added, the usual provision made for the deficiency of the produce of the taxes upon Land and Malt, to the amount of 350 000*l.*

REPAYMENTS TO THE BANK.

1,054,000*l.* is to be provided to repay the Bank for advances upon the growing produce of the Consolidated Fund, and 1,370,000*l.* to discharge Exchequer bills issued on the credit of the Consolidated Fund for 1796, and paid also by the Bank.

FURTHER DEFICIENCIES OF LAND AND MALT.

I shall propose a further provision of 900,000*l.* to meet the deficiencies of Land and Malt not included in the estimate, but which I think may probably arise.

NAVY AND EXCHEQUER BILLS.

The next sum is 1,110,000*l.* voted in the Committee of Supply,

Supply, for the discharge of Navy and Exchequer bills, raised by an act of last session, upon a vote of credit in 1796. The House will recollect, that a provision was made for funding Navy and Exchequer bills, and relieving the market of so much outstanding debt. There was a party who did not choose to avail themselves of the liberty of funding the bills they hold, and this sum was to make good their demands.

CONSOLIDATED FUND.

The next sum is 2,177,000*l.* to make good 3,500,000*l.* charged by an act of last session on the growing produce of the consolidated fund, for the service of the year 1796. 3,500,000*l.* was the sum granted and thought applicable, but various circumstances had operated to its disappointment. Exchequer bills advanced to the merchants of Grenada and St. Vincent's, in consequence of the misfortunes in those colonies were paid in again; a loss was sustained in the product both of the new and old taxes, by the stoppage of our distilleries, the defalcation of which sums was not made good in the year, and to this was to be added the payment of bounties to seamen, by the receivers of the customs out of the produce of that year's revenue, which caused a defalcation in the produce of the customs; and lastly, the bounties upon the importation of corn. These circumstances of course would not make the whole deficiencies good, and leave the Consolidated Fund applicable to the service of 1797; and as I cannot suppose that the Committee would choose to have those sums charged like a mortgage on the Consolidated Fund, I have provided for its relief, and taken them as an article of supply from the 5th of April 1796 to the 5th of April 1797.

VOTE OF CREDIT, AND LOAN TO THE EMPEROR.

There is only one other sum which remains to be stated, and that is a vote of credit to the amount of 3,000,000*l.* As 500,000*l.* has already been advanced to the Emperor, I wish, if it meets with the approbation of Parliament, to be provided with a further sum of 2,500,000*l.* in order to make further advances, if approved of, as the time and exigencies may require. I state this in order to let the Committee know the ultimate amount of what sums it may be necessary to provide; at the same time I desire to have it understood, that I do not mean to pledge any person to a final vote upon further advances to the Emperor, unless for a certain sum

to a limited extent, which I shall state before I sit down. Supposing this vote of credit to take place, however, or not, I shall state that as part of the sum to a limited extent, which I deem absolutely necessary at this critical period, to allow the Emperor to fulfill his engagements, together with my reasons for it. I have now gone through the whole of the supply, all the demands for which it was not possible to calculate before Christmas, and throughout my statements of them I have acted on the report of the Select Committee. In so extensive a statement it is impossible for me to hope that I have proceeded so clearly as not sometimes scarcely to have made myself understood; but if any gentleman labours under any difficulty, I shall only request him to follow me through the very able statements of that report, and I believe he will find our accounts tally so nearly in the estimated services and outstanding arrears, as to shew the fullest confirmation of the accuracy of my statements. For the sake of being more explicit, however, I shall sum up all the heads of the supply in a

RECAPITULATION.

Navy	-	-	-	-	12,661,000
Army	-	-	-	-	6,600,000
Army Extraordinaries	-	-	-	-	3,387,000
Treasury Bills and Army Warrants	-	-	-	-	2,088,000
Ordnance	-	-	-	-	1,623,000
Ordnance, Extraordinaries, and Barracks	-	-	-	-	737,000
Miscellaneous Service	-	-	-	-	929,000
Advances to the merchants of Grenada	-	-	-	-	600,000
Imperial Loan	-	-	-	-	500,000
Annual addition to Sinking Fund	-	-	-	-	200,000
Deficiency of Land and Malt	-	-	-	-	350,000
Re-payments to the Bank for advances on the Consolidated Fund of 1795	-	-	-	-	1,054,000
Ditto 1796	-	-	-	-	1,370,000
Further deficiencies of Land and Malt	-	-	-	-	900,000
To discharge Exchequer bills issued on the credit of the Consolidated Fund for 1796	-	-	-	-	1,110,000
Deficiencies of Consolidated Fund	-	-	-	-	2,177,000
Vote of Credit	-	-	-	-	2,500,000
					38,786,000

Mr. Pitt computed the sum total at 42,766,000*l.* but he omitted the fractions in his computation, and at other times did not punctually adhere to the statements in the report of the Select Committee.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Now, Sir, in regard to the Ways and Means for providing these

these supplies, I must beg leave to state, that a sum a little less than seven millions will cover the expence; because a repayment of some of the advances may take place in the course of the year; 1,500,000*l.* arising from the taxes on the land and malt, will be payable by October, and Exchequer bills to the amount of 1,600,000*l.* will repay the treasury bills in the same sum paid at the bank.

My next duty, in the mean time, is to state with what ways and means I am provided to meet the various sums of this large amount. In order to do that, I shall begin with the land and malt already voted, which according to the usual calculation is reckoned at 2,750,000*l.* The surplus of grants already voted, 420,000*l.* and the loan by voluntary subscription, 18,000,000*l.* making a sum total of 21,170,000*l.* These are the only sums already voted towards defraying the expences of the year, but there were other sums stated in the original statement, of which the first was a lottery. The lottery has varied in the general statement, but taken according to the usual profit, it produces somewhere about 200,000*l.* By Exchequer bills in the former statement, I took credit for 5,500,000*l.* which is the usual amount of Exchequer bills kept afloat: but I do not now think it prudent to rely upon an issue of Exchequer bills to that amount, on account of the recent embarrassments in public credit. I shall not reckon therefore on a larger issue than 3,000,000*l.* which is less than the quantity now in circulation. I shall take the surplus of the growing produce of the consolidated fund on a new estimate, on account of the charges on it, and shall therefore take credit but for a moderate sum to be derived from that source. This moderation does not rise from any diminution of the permanent taxes, because the report of the Select Committee on Finance confirms my repeated assertions of the flourishing state of the permanent revenue; nor does it rise from any considerable disappointment from the produce of new taxes, because, upon a review of the new taxes levied in 1793, 1794, 1795, and the best estimates of the probable amount of the new taxes for 1796, when any supposition is entertained that they will not be able in their ultimate amount to maintain themselves at the produce at which they were computed, by setting them against the loans since raised, and operating one against the other to a general diminution, it will be found that they go near to counterbalance any deficiency, and are nearly equal to the charge upon the consolidated fund by providing the
interc.

interest of the funded debt. But it is to be recollected, that although in laying taxes I take credit for an amount which cannot be so productive as I may have calculated, I have generally endeavoured, soon enough, to meet the encreased charge, and prevent an accumulation of unfunded debt. I now stand with the knowledge of two quarters, freed from a mortgage of 1,075,000*l.* and higher in their computation than I was justified to make them. As heavy as my computation might be, however, I have the satisfaction to hope, the total of the supply may recur before the taxes of next year, though allowance must be taken for both considerations. Every estimate is liable to uncertainty, but the average of the permanent taxes upon four years I find to be 13,910,000*l.* to which adding duties of 1796, I shall have a total sum of 17,803,000*l.* I am aware of the allowance of wine from the stock in hand, but in looking at the produce of the sum total of the permanent taxes, and looking forward to distant periods when fresh sums will become due, I have a right to assume that to be the amount; for when we cease to take account of the stock on hand, the annual consumption will replace the deficiency. The taxes imposed for 1797, were reckoned at 2,100,000*l.* Part of those taxes, it is true, are yet under consideration, but many will take place at an early period. I do not suppose, therefore, that I shall be taking the benefit of the estimate at too much, if upon the whole, I value them at 1,500,000*l.* To this is to be added the further amount of 600,000*l.* which I suppose to be the nett profit of the taxes which I am about to propose, and the advantage of which we are likely to receive by the 5th of April next, so that the whole yearly amount of the produce of the permanent revenue may then be calculated at 19,903,000*l.* Mr. Pitt then calculated the various other sums, to meet the supplies from the arrears of land and malt, the sale of Dutch prizes, the returns of payment to the Bank, the remaining money in hand upon the corn bounties, &c. making a sum total of 42,870,000*l.*

But the loan which he had agreed for provisionally was 18,000,000*l.* of which sum it was intended that 1,500,000*l.* should be borrowed for the service of his Majesty's kingdom of Ireland. The money to be raised at their charge, and interest to be provided for it by that kingdom. It was in his contemplation to propose to the Committee on a future day to make further advances to the Emperor to the amount of 2,000,000*l.* distinctly from the loan of 1,500,000*l.* which

he

he should also propose on a future day, as a specific proposition. In making his bargain for the loan, therefore, he had done it in two ways, he had made a bargain for 14,500,000*l.* certain, of which 13,000,000*l.* were for British services to be provided for at the charge of Britain, and 1,500,000*l.* for, and to be at the charge of Ireland. He had made a bargain conditionally for 3,500,000*l.* if the Committee should agree with him that it would be wise and proper to make a further loan to the Emperor. In his opinion it might be done with perfect safety without affecting the cash of the country, without altering the exchanges of Europe, or in any degree injuring our trade. If the Emperor had an expenditure to make in this country, we might surely assist him to all that amount, such, for instance, as the half-yearly dividend which he had to pay, amounting to 200,000*l.* and he certainly should make a specific proposition to accommodate him by the advance of that sum. On Monday next he should submit a proposition to the Committee to that effect. He now came to state the amount of the *bonus* to the subscribers to the new loan of 18,000,000*l.* He could not say that the terms of that loan were advantageous to the public. They were, however, under all the circumstances, perhaps more favourable than had been anticipated; it was not fair to argue from any depression that had happened since the bargain had been made. Though he had struggled hard for good terms, yet he had not been unmindful of the situation of things, and he thought he might with confidence rely on the equitable nature of the terms to both sides. He had considered the price of the funds on the day when the bargain was made as prices likely to be permanent; he thought that the funds had found their level, and that they were not likely to be depressed further. He had therefore proposed to consider the 3 per cents. consols and reduced, at 50, the 4 per cent. at 64, and the long annuity at fourteen years. To this, however, the contractors did not seem inclined perfectly to agree; they thought that the 3 per cents. reduced, and the 4 per cents. were taken too high. According to this statement the terms were as follows:

125 0 0	of 3 per cents. consols at	50	—	£. 62 10
50 0 0	of 3 per cents. reduced at	50	—	25 0
20 0 0	of 4 per cents. at	64	—	12 16
0 6 6	long annuity at 14 years	—	—	4 11

£. 104 17

Making

Making a bonus to the lender of 4l. 17s. but this, though infinitely too high, was not all, for there was also the discount which he had agreed to allow at the rate of 4 per cent. instead of 3, which had been heretofore usual. To all persons, therefore, who took advantage of this discount, it was worth

— — — 2 8

107 5

To those who did not take advantage of the discount in paying up in full, there was still an advantage by their being entitled to the interest, though they paid their money only by instalments, and this advantage was estimated to be nearly two pounds, so that in every view of the bargain the *bonus* was in reality equal to six pounds seventeen shillings. A great and improvident *bonus* for the public to give, but which, he was sorry to say, that under all the circumstances, he could not prevent. It was to be observed, however, that the six shillings and sixpence of long annuity was only to be given in case the loan should be 18,000,000l. and there was to be a deduction of sixpence for each million, by as many millions as it should be short of that amount. The permanent interest on this loan was at the rate of six pounds seventeen shillings and sixpence, *per cent. per annum*, to which, adding for the charge of management and the redemption fund, the interest would be eight pounds seven shillings and sixpence. It would be necessary for him to move a resolution that Exchequer bills, which had been recently taken at par upon a special condition of being received on the first payment of the loan, should be so received as money. It was a great accommodation to the public; it had prevented these bills from being discredited, and about 420,000l. had been received by Government in this way.

I have taken a view (said Mr. Pitt) of the total amount of the supplies which had been voted for the service of the year, of the total amount of the ways and means which had been provided for defraying the charges already incurred, of the total amount of the produce of the taxes which have been imposed to pay the interest of the capital debt, and stated the terms of the loan which have been provisionally contracted for; and in doing this, I have endeavoured to make provision for an excess of navy debt above the estimate, and for the extraordinaries of the army which might occur in the course of the year 1797. I have only to mention one circumstance, in addition to those which I have already enumerated, which is, that there were some unliquidated claims of the East India company, the amount of which were unknown, but which somewhat encreased our outstanding demands. I do not

not pretend that my statement is entirely free from inaccuracy, error, or omission; but in no one branch of it have I intentionally concealed or mistated the real situation of the country.

Another point which I found it necessary to mention as a probable addition to the public expence, but which I reserve for discussion till it is brought before the House in a regular shape. From a variety of unforeseen and unexpected circumstances, the last loan of eighteen millions, which have been raised by voluntary subscription, has fallen to a rate of discount which has been attended with considerable loss to the subscribers. It would be matter of separate and distinct consideration on a future day, whether the House would allow that loss entirely to rest upon the subscribers, who had so laudably and honourably manifested their zeal and their patriotism in the public cause, or whether some relief ought not to be granted to them proportionate to the loss which they had sustained.

Of the loan which had been provisionally contracted for, there was, he said, as he had stated before, a million and an half as a loan for the payment of the sums already advanced to the Emperor; a million and an half for Ireland, and two millions to provide for such farther advances as the House might think fit, upon mature deliberation, to authorize the Government to send to his Imperial Majesty. There remained, therefore, just thirteen millions, for which he had to provide interest at the rate of 8l. 7s. 6d. including the reduction fund, which amounted to a sum of 959,000l. Besides this, there was a floating navy debt of three millions and a half, which could not be diminished while the war continued, and which could only be paid off at the return of peace. But, as money would then be borrowed on better terms than at present, he found it necessary to provide only 5 per cent. interest for this debt, which would make a sum of 175,000l. There was also a deficiency arising from some of the taxes which he had proposed before Christmas having been abandoned, amounting to about 100,000l. which it was necessary for him now to supply. The whole interest, therefore, which he had to provide for by additional imposts, amounted to 1,234,000l. There was no reason to suppose that the taxes which had been imposed before Christmas would be less productive than they had been estimated, and in forming the present estimate of the sum wanted to pay the interest of the increased capital debt, he took

724 WOODFALL'S PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS. [COMMONS,
no credit for any surplus which might arise from the produce
of the permanent taxes.

NEW TAXES.

Under this view of the subject, the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* proceeded to state the outline of the sources of taxation which appeared to be least objectionable for defraying the burthens which we were under the necessity of meeting, and by meeting which with manliness and courage we were most likely to overcome the difficulties of our situation. And upon this part of the subject he confessed feeling himself a good deal at a loss, since there was no mode of taxation that he could propose which was not liable to objections of one kind or other. It was to be recollected, however, that our situation was one which there was only a choice of evils, and our submission was due to those which, upon the whole, were the least pressing. In looking at the different branches of revenue, there was one source of taxation which appeared to him to be preferable to any other, because the produce was easily raised, widely diffused, and which pressed little upon any particular class, especially the lower orders of society, and it was the more eligible on this account, that the revenue arising from it, at the same time that it was ample, was safely and expeditiously collected at a small expence.

STAMPS.

What I allude to, said he, is the general branch of stamp duties, which, though they are now more than double what they were in the American war, have not undergone any considerable increase for some years. My object is to impose an additional duty which would bear upon the great mass of stamps, with the exception only of those which had been lately increased, or of those which from their nature would not admit of any augmentation. The class on which I shall propose the greatest addition, is that which passed under the name of consolidated stamp duties, by which was meant that class in which stamps of the same denomination were applied to a great number of different instruments, such as deeds, copyholds, adjudications, and all law instruments. I mean, however, that law instruments should be exempted from the operation of the tax, because, though it certainly is proper as much as possible to discourage litigation, yet, while it might tend to diminish the number of frivolous law suits, it might also increase oppressive costs, which, for the sake of justice, ought to be avoided. Besides law instruments, I am of opinion that the probates of wills for small sums should be included in the ex-
ception,

ception. As a tax upon legacies has been lately imposed, I propose that they also should be exempted in the present instance. Policies of insurance for the same reason have a fair claim to exemption. Upon the great bulk of the stamps, however, upon which I propose that the present tax should operate, I think that the present duty should be doubled. This source of revenue I expect to yield 320,000l.

TRANSFERS OF PROPERTY.

The next object of taxation to which I look are transfers of property. I do not mean that the tax on single skins, which now pay a stamp duty of seven shillings, should be doubled; I only intend that the duty should be increased three shillings, that they should pay ten shillings instead of seven. It must have appeared, however, that the instruments by which validity was given to any transaction, and to which property owed security, might fairly be made a test of contribution. I have to propose, therefore, not only an additional stamp duty upon each skin, but a scale of duty proportioned to the consideration in money which is transferred. This is only extending a principle already recognized and adopted in the duty which was imposed upon property sold by auction. That duty was sixpence per pound upon real property, and tenpence per pound on all personal property, disposed of in that way, and produced 100,000l. a year. Observing that that tax did not operate against the disposal of property by auction, and calculating that ten millions of property were annually transferred from one hand to another, I compute that by imposing a duty of fourpence per pound on all private transfers, a sum would be raised of at least 170,000l. per annum.

COPIES OF DEEDS.

At present there is a stamp on all deeds, but I understand that authenticated copies of them, unstamped, are admitted. I see no reason why the duty should not attach to the copy as well as to the original. It has been suggested to me, that a regulation of this kind would bring into the revenue 40,000l. per annum.

PROBATES OF WILLS.

The fourth article which I mean to propose as a subject of taxation, relates to the probates of wills, all of which, except those for sums under 300l. I shall move to pay a certain duty, which may produce the sum of 40,000l.

NEWSPAPERS.

The next subject I have to offer to the Committee, is one which

which will produce a great deal of discussion out of this House. It relates to a certain species of property well known in this country; but it will be the vehicle (and that not a verbal one) of conveying to the different parts of the country what I am now stating. When I consider the great prevalence of this vehicle of general intelligence; when I consider the amazing extent to which it has been carried; that the luxury of it has been so very generally felt and practised; that the taste of the public is not likely to be shaken by any trifling increase in the price of an article sought after with such universal avidity; when I consider also the immense profits produced by these articles of luxury, which are of a nature that ought not to exempt them from their share of general taxation, I conceive that the laying of an additional duty on newspapers is a measure that cannot be in any manner objectionable. This might be done without any injury either to the editors or the authors of such publications. The present duty is 2d. on each paper; in addition to which I should propose a further tax of one penny halfpenny; and even in that case considerable gains will be produced to the proprietors of papers. I should conceive that the price to customers ought not to be raised any higher than this additional duty; because on a former occasion, in consequence of an increased duty on paper, the price of newspapers were raised far beyond that proportion, and has continued so ever since; therefore I do not imagine the proprietors of them can now have any equitable claim to an increase in their price. The sum produced by this duty will amount to 114,000l.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

The next thing I have to propose, is a modification of the duties on advertisements published in newspapers. According to the regulations that exist at present, there is no difference in the duty upon an advertisement of three lines and that on one of the greatest extent. I should propose to vary the present mode, and according to the regulations which I shall offer, there may be advertisements the duty on which shall amount only to some shillings, while on others the duty shall rise up to some pounds sterling. The estimated produce from this source will amount to 20,000l.

ATTORNIES' CERTIFICATES.

The next duty I have to propose, is to arise from a regulation of the stamps on attornies certificates, by which certain frauds that have hitherto been practised may be prevented. This will produce the sum of 15,000l.

PLATE,

PLATE.

There is one more article of luxury which I shall propose to lay a tax on ; that is, all *plate that shall be manufactured for the purpose of ornamental use*, which will produce the sum of 30,000*l.*

All those taxes which I have just enumerated, seem to me to press as lightly on the general bulk of the people as any I could think of ; and least of all to increase the national difficulties.

TOLLS.

There still remains one more to be added. I have endeavoured to find one, which, although I confess it is not free from some speculative and practical objections, will not however be found inconvenient to the public at large. It is a subject which has often been thought of before this time ; which has been once before this House, but was withdrawn. This is a tax on carriages of all sorts, and on goods of all kinds conveyed by carriages which pass through turnpike-gates, where the tax is to operate by an increase of the tolls. To this it will be right to make some exemptions ; such as exemptions on all new tolls till they shall have risen to a certain amount—general exceptions provided for by general laws—and local exceptions in certain districts. The same exceptions that now prevail in tolls ought also to prevail on the part of the public ; and I should propose that the same duty may be taken for the public, that is now paid for tolls. I cannot exactly say how much this will produce ; but I know that when it was brought forward here about fifteen years ago, it was estimated at no less a sum than between 4 and 500,000*l.* I have had an opportunity of knowing the amount of the tolls of the gates about the metropolis, which are not a tenth part of those throughout the whole kingdom. By this means I can in some manner ascertain the amount of the present tax ; and I think it will produce between 4 and 500,000*l.* With respect to the principle of this tax, it may be objected to on the ground of its being a great hardship to lay a burthen on passengers and the conveyance of goods ; but I hope when gentlemen will consider how small a portion must fall to each individual, that they will not look upon this as a grievance, but rather as a manner of lightening the general burthens.

I have now stated every thing which I conceived material in as concise a manner as I could ; and I return my thanks to the Committee for the indulgence they have shewn me during the length of time I have trespassed on their attention.

tion. I have no other excuse to make than that I am pleading the necessity of dwelling on a subject which I did not wish to bring forward imperfectly. And I now submit this pleasing circumstance to the consideration of the House, that in the midst of difficulties, and apparently surrounded by calamities, we have still been able to find such ample resources, as those which have been stated to them this day. I call upon them to reflect, that at the moment when we are struggling with a great contest—while we are labouring under pressures as heavy as they are unexampled; we still see the strength and powers which we possess; and that if we are not to be alarmed at imaginary evils, if we are not to be dispirited by events which are not so calamitous in themselves as they have been conceived to be, we shall find the radical wealth and the ample means of this country fully sufficient to support us in every conjuncture of our affairs, and ultimately to restore us to that situation from which we have been removed for a time, by circumstances as extraordinary as they have been unavoidable. The Chancellor of the Exchequer concluded by moving resolutions founded on his statements.

Mr. *Fox* said, the subject now proposed to the consideration of the Committee, is of such vast and serious importance, that I think it unnecessary to apologize for following the right hon. Gentleman through some of the various statements and calculations he has made, and offering my reasons for differing most essentially in opinion with him, not only with regard to the state of the finances of the country, but also with respect to the deductions which he has endeavoured to establish from the positions which he has brought forward. The road, Sir, we have to travel, is not beset with flowers, but opens to our view a comfortless and dreary prospect, and, while we rashly continue to pursue it, we are deprived of every means to avoid the impending precipices with which it is on every side surrounded. I intreat gentlemen to consider and compare the statements they have heard this day from the right hon. Gentleman, and those with which he has, on former occasions, but too successfully deluded them. But however specious and unfounded his financial calculations have formerly been, they are even exceeded in delusion by his statements made this day, which I maintain are altogether unprecedented in the history of finance. The right honourable Gentleman came forward in the month of December last, and having succeeded in obtaining a supply of 18 millions, he now repeats the experiment, and calls
den

on us for the same sum. But how has he prefaced this sudden and extraordinary demand? He has declared, that the task of applying to the House, after so short an interval, and for so large a sum, is irksome and painful to him, and that he has been disappointed in his views. That he has disappointed us by this unexpected application, I most readily admit; but what particular disappointments the right hon. Gentleman may have experienced, which compels him to have recourse to our liberality, after the recent and most convincing proof we have already given of it, or which can justify his applying for this enormous sum, I am, Sir, at a loss to conceive. Does he forget the language which he used in this House on the 7th of last December, and must he be reminded, that 18 millions then advanced were given not so much with an idea of prosecuting the war, as with an earnest hope of enabling him to forward the great and desirable work of peace? Can it be necessary for me to recall to him the public wishes at that period for a speedy termination of the war; and that the loan was accomplished on the general hope of a successful issue to Lord Malmesbury's embassy? He told us then, that the advance of 18 millions was an ample supply, for such were his words, for the exigencies of the state, and adequate to the pressure of every circumstance. Yet no disappointment has since happened to induce him so suddenly to repeat the experiment. I can not for my part perceive any disappointment which can have compelled him to this unprecedented application, except the state of Ireland alone, and the sum required for the embarrassments of that kingdom amounts to a million and a half. What other disappointments the sanguine expectations of the right hon. Gentleman may have suffered, he has not condescended to inform us. I clearly exposed the illusions with which he amused the House when he called on us to provide for the last loan of 18 millions, and the event has fully verified what I then pressed so earnestly on the attention of gentlemen. With respect to the statements made in the report of the Select Committee, of the produce of the permanent taxes for the years 1793, 1794, and 1795, I am willing to give the right hon. Gentleman every benefit he may wish to derive from that report, however I may differ in opinion with the subject matter of the report, and object to the documents on which it is founded. In speaking of the produce of the taxes in 1796, as stated in the report of the

Select Committee, on which he builds his calculations, (I stop here for a moment, and request it may be remembered, that I do not agree to the extent of that part of the report, or to the use which he make of it.) Not knowing the amount of the Hat and Legacy duty, I allow them to produce what he himself thinks fit to state; but when I come to the Wine duty, there, Sir, I beg leave to observe, that I differ both with the Committee and with the right honourable gentleman. The stock in hand cannot, in any respect be considered as an annual tax, and, indeed, the right honourable gentleman seems by the very arguments which he introduces in favour of that opinion to admit that it cannot be viewed in that light. The fair way to estimate the produce of the wine-duty is to calculate it for 1796 on the same ground as if it was considered in 1795; and I will, Sir, by a parity of reasoning, argue for the produce of 1797 by the experience we have had of the preceding year. Thus having given the right honourable Gentleman full credit for the Hat and Legacy duty, and admitting that a duty of 20l. per ton will produce in 1796, what it has produced in 1795, I still maintain that there remains a deficiency of no less a sum than 357,000l. in the produce of the taxes brought forward by the right honourable Gentleman. I will not argue that because he was *minus* 357,000l. he should have immediately proceeded to provide for it; but I will contend, that for him to maintain that he had a surplus when he was actually *minus* 357,000l. is an allusion of too gross and palpable a nature to impose on the understanding. But if even the taxes of 1796 produced the sum it was intended they should, there would still be a deficiency of 88,000l. and that according to the report of the Select Committee. Let us then consider that at the beginning of the session we were 357,000l. short: that in October the right honourable Gentleman funds his Navy bills, and immediately after, in December, makes his loan, should he not then have said that the interest of the taxes was not equal to meet the public exigencies? Instead of the taxes which have been proposed, it appears that a sum of 1,800,000l. in taxes would not be too much for the various calls of the present moment. The deficiency on my calculation amounts to 470,000l. and not to 210,000l. as stated by the right honourable Gentleman, and in the report of the Select Committee. And here, Sir, I think it necessary to declare, that the report of
that

that Committee does not merit the eulogium which has been lavished on it. I believe it has originated from and has been conducted with good intentions, but that it is particularly clear, that it is founded on convincing documents, and that it is supported by evident and accurate calculations, I can by no means admit. For I beg leave to ask, what has been the line of conduct pursued by the members of the Committee? They sent to the public offices for the calculations in the respective departments; and on these papers, so supplied through the very channel of Government, they proceeded to form a decisive opinion, and here I must notice, that in delivering their decision to the House they have merely grounded their proceedings on the authorities furnished incontestibly by Government, and which alone we are thus called upon to sanction. In stating the produce of the permanent taxes, they have recourse to the stoppage of the distilleries, for the purpose of accounting for the deficiency which took place in them, and proceeding on the same system, they also allude to the bounties granted to seamen in 1796, when it cannot be denied, that these bounties were in reality issued not in one year, but within a year and a half. This conduct was therefore prejudicial to the produce of the permanent taxes in 1795, and to that of other years. They say, that the stoppage of the distilleries between June 1795, and November 1796, must have materially affected the amount of that part of the produce which arises from the duty on British spirits. They do not venture to state the precise deficiency, but on comparing the produce of the duties on British spirits in 1796, with the average produce of the same duties in the three preceding years, the deficiency is said to be 557,793*l*. They immediately after admit, that upon this computed account of the loss upon the distilleries, an allowance should be made in consideration of any increase of duties upon beer which may have taken place within the same period; but what the amount of that allowance may be, they do not attempt to point out. Thus, Sir, it is evident, that they estimate a deficiency in one instance with respect to the stoppage of the distilleries, on the system of a computed average, and reject any substitute for that deficiency in the instance of the duties on beer, which they clearly admit have increased, but which they do not think proper to estimate by comparing it with the average produce of other years, as they have done in the case of distilleries. Let us for a moment take the average produce of the

the beer tax for the three preceding years, and we shall find that there arises a sum of 270,000*l.* in favour of last year, which has been entirely overlooked in the report of the Committee. This sum, I therefore contend, ought to have been added to the produce of the permanent taxes. They have also, Sir, stated their estimate of the navy service for the ensuing year to amount to 12,935,000*l.* but the right honourable Gentleman differs in this very material consideration from the Committee, and fixes it at 12,661,000*l.* to which if we add, as we are justified in doing, the floating arrears of 1,500,000*l.* the estimate will then appear to be 14,161,000*l.* Thus the right honourable Gentleman, instead of making his estimate, as he says it is less by 1,000,000*l.* than that furnished by the Committee, will in fact make it greatly exceed that which we find in the report. I wish to know, Sir, on what principle he has calculated the probable increase of the navy debt for the ensuing year. In my opinion the best, and certainly the most satisfactory way would be, to calculate it by the experience we have had of the expences incurred in that department of the public service during the last year. I must observe, that in every estimate of this nature he has been always disappointed, and the cause is obvious: he has continually acted on erroneous principles, and has therefore been continually mistaken. What is the line of conduct then which he should adopt? Why, Sir, instead of confining himself to narrow and circumscribed statements, instead of implicitly regulating his judgment by the standard of official accounts and trifling calculations, he ought to take matters on a larger, and unquestionably a more secure basis, since it is established by the experience of the past. Let us take a short view of the effect of those estimates on which he prides himself. On the 7th of December, 1795, the right honourable Gentleman stated, that the probable increase of the navy debt would be 2½ millions, and this he called a very ample estimate. Then it arose to 4 millions; then to 7 millions; and now, in the month of April, which seems to be a fixed term for bringing forward a second budget, he calls for 8 millions more. The right honourable Gentleman next tells us, that he has all his documents from the respective offices; and this I believe to be true; but he ought to suppose an increase not merely from official papers, but from the constant experience of facts. The expences of the navy are at this moment on a much larger scale than any time during the war.

war. 110,000 men were voted for the service of last year, we have this year voted 120,000. Instead, therefore, of making the increase less than it was, he should make it proportionably greater, and it ought to be 6 or 700,000l. more than what it is now fixed at. With respect to the army extraordinaries, the right honourable Gentleman says, they are included in the common estimate, but will he not admit that many after payments have frequently taken place? And if so, is it not very likely that such expences will be incurred on future occasions? I feel myself justified in declaring, from the various views which I have taken of these important subjects, that notwithstanding all the heavy burdens, and all the dreadful taxes we are about to impose this day, we have still one million more to provide for the exigencies of the public service. On the subject of affording pecuniary succours to the Emperor, the right honourable Gentleman expresses his desire to have a certain sum reserved for that purpose, and in that point I perfectly agree with him. Yet, what is not a little extraordinary, he wishes to have 200,000l. voted as a loan to his Imperial Majesty immediately; nay, Sir, if I rightly understand him, he wishes to have the measure agreed to this very night. I hope the right honourable Gentleman will set me right, if I have misconceived his intention, or if I mistake what I take to be a most alarming proceeding (Mr. Pitt here signified his intention of moving the 200,000l. in the course of the night). Then, Sir, I maintain such a proceeding to be a direct infringement of the declaration made by the right honourable Gentleman, that he wished to have the pecuniary succour intended for the Emperor, reserved to a convenient opportunity. I will not pretend to say how far the credit of the country may be hurt by the measure, but let me ask, is there any material difference between exporting 200,000l. sterling, and not receiving 200,000l. sterling which this country was to receive? Did the right honourable Gentleman speak of this extraordinary manner of paying the interest of the loan, when he asked us to be security for the House of Austria, and when he extolled the good faith of the bank of Vienna? But having in compliance with his arguments and entreaties guaranteed the loan, he now with singular feeling laments, it is extremely hard to think that the Emperor could pay the interest, as he says, to a day. To a day, Sir!—With more propriety may the right honourable Gentleman say, it is hard to suppose

suppose that the Emperor can discharge it to a year, or to a far more distant time. But when will it be paid? The loan was made to him in critical circumstances, and yet he is not to pay the interest, because he is now in critical circumstances. There has not been hitherto one shilling of the interest discharged, and I fear this country will ever have cause to repent lending money to the Emperor. The right honourable Gentleman must be aware, that if the interest remains unpaid, he must come to the House and provide taxes for the sum guaranteed by us to his Imperial Majesty, and thus add, by more permanent taxes, to the burdens already too heavy to be borne. With respect to the specious argument which is held out, that the restoration of Peace will, by restoring commerce to its full extent, also make the produce of the taxes more considerable; I on the contrary maintain, that peace is much more likely to diminish than encrease the amount of our taxes. For when we look over our taxes, we find upwards of one million arising entirely from articles which could not be taxed in peace. I cannot agree that the state of our manufactures is more flourishing than it was last year, for the assertion is positively contradicted by the manufacturers themselves. When the right honourable Gentleman proposed last year to lay a tax on landed and personal property, he stated the landed rent to amount to 25 millions sterling. I am, however, one of those who think he undervalued it, but taking it at his own estimate, I feel myself justified in saying, that when we have passed the taxes now proposed, and when, after the winding up of the war, we come to a state of peace, we shall have a revenue equal to our whole landed annual product. We are now, Sir, at the end of April, and 18 millions are yet to be found. Three payments have only been made on the Loyalty Loan, and there are still seven-tenths of it to be made good, which amount to 12,600,000*l.* We are to vote 18 millions to-day; so that between this day and the 1st of January next, we have yet to find, for the public exigencies, the enormous sum of 30,600,000*l.* We have to furnish in so short a space of time as 35 weeks, 30,600,000*l.* or, in other words, almost one million per week, till the end of the year.

But, Sir, there is still another point of view in which I wish to place this most serious and alarming consideration. In 1796, the new taxes only produced three million. What then, Sir, is the burden which the subject has hitherto felt?—The weight of that sum alone. But the taxes to be imposed this day, with all the others, will make seven millions and a half. So that we have actually felt only three millions; and, to
use

use a favourite expression of Ministers, we have been as yet only scratched by the war, for the people have not experienced half the weight of the burthens imposed upon them, and which they must suffer, when they come to pay seven millions and a half instead of three. That it is right and necessary to look these dangers in the face, the right honourable Gentleman himself admits, though he is by no means ready to practise the theory which he proclaims. There still remains another article with respect to future expenditure, to which I wish to direct the attention of Gentlemen. I mean, Sir, the bills to be drawn this year, in St. Domingo, on this country, probably to the amount of 900,000*l*. The bills drawn in January amounted to 700,000*l*. Whether they have been paid, I cannot undertake to say; but if half remains unpaid, and an additional sum of 900,000*l*. is drawn for, I conceive it very difficult to find how the whole is to be discharged. I do not blame the Select Committee for proceeding to their report on the calculations laid before them, but I blame both the Committee and the House for not grounding their opinion on others that convey more solid information; I mean those which are furnished by experience. I am fully sensible of the inestimable value of Peace to the country, and it will, by a geometrical progression, become more valuable every year. I know no system to obtain the blessings which it diffuses, and secures, but an unequivocal and steady pursuit in the attainment of it. It is not, Sir, in my opinion, likely to be restored to us by sending Mr. Hammond, or any other man in the hour of impending danger and necessity to Vienna, but in openly declaring and vigorously adhering to equitable and honourable terms. But something more is requisite to be done. The House must prove themselves the Representatives of the People. They must shew the people that they do not blindly confide in a Minister by whom they have been so often and so shamefully deceived; and if there is not patriotism enough left to force them to act thus, there is, I do not hesitate to assert, an end of the Constitution. From the measures pursued, and the system avowed by Ministers of persevering in them, the country is every day involved in additional perplexities and embarrassments. It is in vain we look round for an open and cheering prospect, for amid this labyrinth and confusion, we strive to no purpose to rescue ourselves from distress—

“While Alps on Alps arise.”

With respect to the vote for the army extraordinaries, does any man think that the arrears of the army will be extinguish-

ed

ed by that measure? No, Sir! I am of an opinion directly contrary. The exertion of the public spirit is in this momentous crisis absolutely necessary. The people ought to know, that we should have a complete change of system—a change from a blind confidence in Miners to watchfulness and jealousy of their conduct. I believe, Sir, I have nothing farther to remark than that if the right honourable Gentleman means to take the sense of the House on the measure of lending 200,000*l.* to the Emperor, I shall most certainly oppose it.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* in reply to the question put by Mr. Fox, said it was his intention to propose a resolution, granting a temporary loan to the Emperor of 200,000*l.*

Mr. Grey said, that there was an article in the report of the Select Committee of which he wished to have some explanation. There was a sum of 1,500,000*l.* stated to be unfunded debt not sufficiently provided for. He wished to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether sums had not been specifically granted last Session of Parliament for the payment of this charge, the money for which had however been diverted to other purposes? That the right honourable Gentleman had violated the Acts of Appropriation, and diverted the money granted by Parliament to different objects, he had already stated against him as very highly criminal. The instance to which he here alluded would shew that the right honourable Gentleman still persevered in this conduct, and would unmask the system of finance which he pursued. The Bank had advanced the sum of one million and a half on the Consolidated Fund. In the month of April last a loan of seven millions was raised for the purpose of paying the advances made by the Bank; and the sum of five millions and a half was specifically granted for repaying the Bank such advances, among which this article was included. It appeared now, however, that the money had not been so applied. This debt was kept concealed till disclosed in this Report, and now it was to be discharged from the supplies of this year. If the House allowed such practices to continue, if they allowed a Chancellor of the Exchequer to set at nought the Acts of Appropriation, and to apply grants of money to purposes for which they were not originally destined, they would betray their duty to their constituents and to their country. He was very anxious to get an explanation of this circumstance, and he was afraid the honourable Gentleman would not find it easy to give a satisfactory one.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that from the warm manner in which the honourable Gentleman had proposed his question, it might perhaps be difficult to satisfy him, but he hoped

hoped he would be able to satisfy the House on the subject. The objection, however, was founded entirely in misconception. The sum had not been granted by parliament for that specific purpose, nor had there been any violation of the Appropriation Act. When the loan was made for the purpose of paying off the debt on the Exchequer Bills, the Bank had not availed themselves of the opportunity to subscribe, and there was power by the Act of Appropriation to pay them in cash. This, at the end of the year, made the grant exceed the supplies, and the sum alluded to so far from being conceal'd, was comprehended in the last Budget, and was paid out of the supplies of the year 1797.

Mr. Grey said, he had never heard of this sum not being paid till he saw it in the Report of the Select Committee. He therefore wished an unequivocal answer to the question he had proposed. He asked, whether the sum of one million and a half had not been granted for the purpose of repaying the advances made by the Bank? Whether this sum was comprehended in these advances, and whether the grant, to this extent at least, had not been diverted from its destination?

Mr. Steele stated the history of this sum in the same manner as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was surprised that the honourable Gentleman, with so little justice, propriety, or foundation, and uninformed as he was on the subject, could bring forward against his honourable Friend an accusation of a practice which the House had always reprobated.

Mr. Grey said, that the honourable Gentleman's assertion, that the House had always reprobated the practice, was as ill-founded as his charge against him of accusing without information. He had proved to the House that, on former occasions, the right honourable Gentleman had been guilty of that practice, and if the House had done their duty, he would not have been in a situation to repeat his offence. Mr. Grey restated his charge, and read the evidence of Mr. Bosanquet before the Secret Committee, which proved that this sum was not repaid from the sum destined to pay the advances of the Bank, but was paid by the Bank keeping back their subscription to the last loan. The explanation attempted to be given would lead the House to believe, that after all the transactions that had taken place between Ministers and the Bank, after the former had been solicited day after day, and week after week, to repay the sums advanced by the Bank, that the latter did not avail themselves of the opportunity they had of obtaining payment of this fund. Let any one look at the Report of

the Secret Committee, and believe this story who can. He wished that some Director of the Bank were present to give the House satisfaction on this point.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said that the report of the Secret Committee was but recently distributed, and he was not yet ready for the discussion. It was proved, however, that this sum had not been specifically granted, and that payment of it had not been withheld. Instead of having violated the act of appropriation, it had been strictly observed, as there was no power to discharge the debt in cash, and the Bank had not availed themselves of the mode by which the payment must have been made.

Mr. *Fox* said that the right hon. Gentleman defended himself by comments on form, and by special pleadings. It was certain that whether or not the sum had been specifically granted for the purpose of paying off that debt, it had been granted in contemplation of that being done. What the House had done in this view, or if the right hon. Gentleman was better pleased with his own long word in contemplation of this, had not been complied with, and the money had been diverted to other purposes.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* said, that when he acted upon the spirit of an act he was accused in violating its letter; and now when he had complied with the letter he was accused of special pleading!

Mr. *Fox* said that the right hon. Gentleman had not complied with the spirit of the act. He had raised money on false pretences, because it was not applied to the objects for which it was originally asked.

Mr. *Grey* repeated his objection.

Mr. *Sheridan* said, that as the report of the Committee of Finance had been the subject of some animadversion, he should say a few words on this point. The right honourable Gentleman had formerly misrepresented what he had said upon this report on a former occasion. He had said, that he considered himself responsible for every part of it against which he had not dissented. He believed there was no material fallacy in the report. The instructions under which they acted, however, had prevented them from proceeding entirely in the manner which his honourable friend had justly preferred. He should now say only a single word on the taxes, for it was the custom of the right. hon. Gentleman

man to consider the taxes as unanimously assented to, if they were received with no marks of disapprobation on their first introduction. In no part of his speech had the right hon. Gentleman fully met our situation, and many of the taxes proposed he thought highly exceptionable. To that on plate alone he had no objection. That on tolls was inconsistent with every idea of property and justice. That on newspapers he should likewise oppose in every stage, as it struck severely against the liberty of the press, by raising every kind of periodical undertaking for the diffusion of knowledge so high priced, as to preclude the possibility of its any longer passing into general circulation, by putting it beyond the reach of those in middling or lower ranks. Newspapers were denominated a luxury, but was the dismal catalogue of miseries and distress which they now almost constantly contained, a luxury to those by whom they were read? The tax proposed went ultimately to the annihilation of cheap publications, for the instruction or information of the public. It was not surprising, however, that such Ministers as the present should be desirous by any means to impose a check on their progress, or completely to accomplish their destruction.

The different resolutions were then put,

On that relative to newspapers a division took place on the motion of Mr. Sheridan.

<i>For the resolution</i>	—	—	151
<i>Against it</i>	—	—	43

Majority. 108

The resolutions were all carried in the affirmative.

After the division strangers were not again admitted.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, April 27.

Lord Auckland moved that a message should be sent to the House of Commons, requesting the House to communicate to their Lordships the reports from the Committees of Secrecy and of Finance. Agreed to.

The bill for confirming the Minute of Council was read a second time, and ordered to be committed next day.

Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, *April 27.*

The *Speaker* informed the House, that he had received a letter from Sir Thomas Mostyn, stating, that he did not intend to defend his return for the county of Flint against the allegations of a petition which had been presented, complaining for an undue return for the said county. By the provision of the act of the 28th of his present Majesty it was necessary that thirty days should elapse between the notification of this letter in the Gazettee, which would be on Saturday, and the day on which the question could come again before the House, and the order for hearing the petition discharged.

The *Master of the Rolls* complained very much of the manner in which the hon. Baronet had caused this delay, when he must have known that the objections stated in the petition were well founded.

The letter being read, the order for hearing the petition was deferred to the first of June.

Sir *John Sinclair* brought up the report of the Committee on Waste Lands, which was ordered to be laid on the table, to be printed, and to be taken into further consideration on Wednesday next.

Mr. *Abbot* moved the order of the day, for taking into further consideration the report of the Committee for the promulgation of the statutes.

The resolutions of the Committee were read and agreed to.

Mr. *Abbot* said, that as the subject matter of this report was a common concern to both Houses, he should move that the resolutions be communicated to the Lords, and that a conference be desired with their Lordships, and also their concurrence thereto.

These motions being put and carried, and Mr. *Abbot* having gone to the House of Lords, and returned, stated that their Lordships agreed to the conference, and desired it might take place on Monday next, at four o'clock.

Mr. *Rider* moved for leave to bring in a bill to indemnify the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and persons acting as such in the West-India islands, for permitting the importation of goods in foreign bottoms, &c.—Granted.

He moved also for leave to bring in a bill to permit, for a time to be limited, the importation of foreign cambrics and French lawns.—Granted.

BUDGET.

BUDGET.

Mr. *Douglas* brought up the report of the Committee of Supply.

Mr. *Fox* asked the Minister how he made up the sum of 1,284,000*l.* out of the taxes as he had stated their produce in round sums last night? for it appeared by the notes of several gentlemen, that the sums he had stated fell short of that amount by a very considerable sum. He apprehended, therefore, that the right honourable Gentleman must have omitted to state something, or must have made a mistake in his calculation, a thing which certainly might have easily happened in the multiplicity of items which he had to bring forward.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, in reply to Mr. *Fox*, stated, across the table, that he did compute the sum total at 1,284,000*l.* and recapitulated the items as follow:

Increased Consolidated Stamp Duties	-	-	-	320,000
Tax on Property transferred by Private Contract	-	-	-	170,000
Copies of Deeds	-	-	-	50,000
Probates of Wills	-	-	-	40,000
Bills of Exchange	-	-	-	40,000
Addition of 1½ <i>d.</i> on Newspapers	-	-	-	114,000
Increased Duty on Advertisements	-	-	-	20,000
On Attornies' Certificates	-	-	-	15,000
On Gold and Silver Wrought Plate	-	-	-	30,000
On Insurances from Fire	-	-	-	35,000
And Duty equal to the Tolls on all Carriages passing through Turnpikes	-	-	-	450,000
				£. 1,284,000

The resolution for making an advance by way of loan of 200,000*l.* for the service of the Emperor being read a first and second time, and the question put upon it, was carried without a division.

Mr. *Douglas* then brought up the report of the Committee of Ways and Means.

The resolutions were all read over.

On the motion being made that the resolutions be read a second time,

Mr. *Fox* said, he did not mean to enter into any debate that evening, after the elaborate discussion of the preceding night, but he rose merely to re-assert that some part of the right hon. Gentleman's statements of that night were palpable delusions. The right honourable Gentleman stated, that he had not only provided for the funded debt, but three millions and a half of navy debt, whereas he contended, that, upon the duty of 20*l.* per ton on wine only, in 1796, there was 248,000*l.* deficiency in one calculation, and at least 90,245*l.* upon another. With regard

regard to the other point which he had to notice, the general provision for the general Supply, he thought it wrong to flatter ourselves that the expences for the naval service could be 17,000*l.* less this year than the last, when, instead of voting 110,000 seamen, as we did last year, we had voted 120,000. The same sort of reduction in provision was made in the army, where the estimates were 2,000,000*l.* less than the expences of last year; and the ordnance estimates were considerably shorter than last year, and if compared with those of 1795, were shorter still. He blamed this sort of popular subterfuge and evasion, and predicted, that the consequence would be a final inefficiency.

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, that the whole of the taxes had been met within the sum of 2 or 300,000*l.* and he desired to know whether there was ever a period of war before, when an adequate provision was made in any thing like that proportion. Was the view of it discouraging, or did it impose a belief that the deficiency must continue, and that it therefore was the duty of the House to levy fresh taxes? As to the other point, he had at all times felt the difficulty of forming a correct estimate of the probable expences of the year; but before the honourable Gentleman-blamed him for narrowing the provision, he ought to enquire whether the general expences of the naval service might not be smaller than formerly? Whether the leading articles of provision might not be considerably cheaper? Whether the active expeditions of the army might not be restrained? And, whether the quantity of ordnance wanted might not in consequence be less? He ought to take something for his guide, for there was no rule of conjecture that could aid him. The ordnance expences had been decreasing for the two last years; the army extraordinaries of former years were done away; the bills from the West-Indies were controuled, and the disbursements in St. Domingo would no longer continue on the same scale, unless with gross and direct disobedience. These were important considerations, and these had induced him to confine his estimate.

Mr. *Fox* wished to know how the deficiency of funded debt was to be defrayed?

The *Chancellor of the Exchequer* replied, by Exchequer Bills.

Mr. *Wm. Smith* observed, that if the marriage of the Princess Royal took place, there would be a further sum to provide for her dower of 80 or 100,000*l.* To this was to be added, 400,000*l.* at least, for the increased pay of the seamen, and the additional *bonus* to the subscribers of the loyalty loan, would amount to
about

about 300,000*l.* more, making in all a further sum to be provided of 800,000*l.*

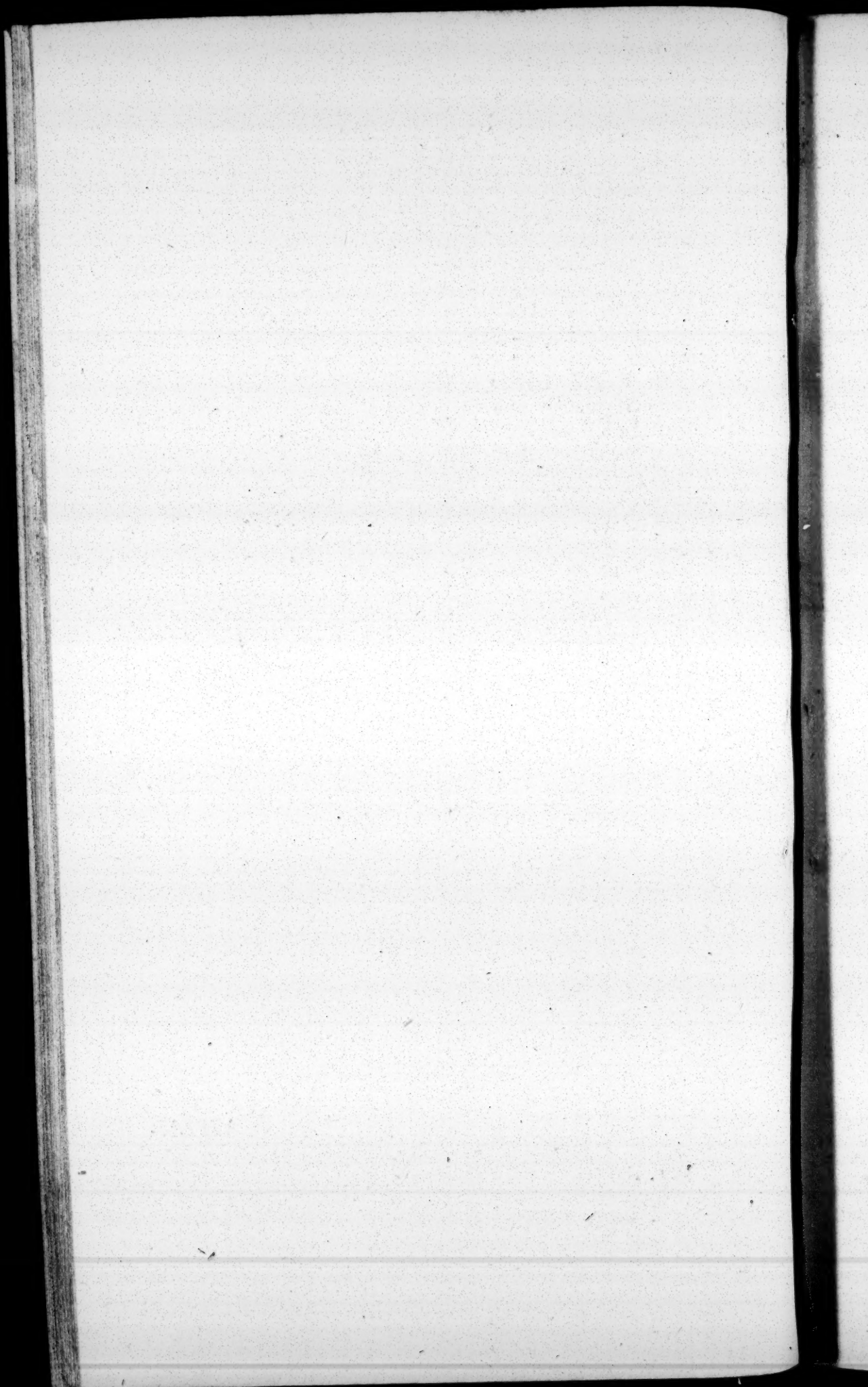
The resolution was then read and agreed to, and bills ordered to be brought in for carrying them into effect.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* brought up a copy of a letter from lieutenant governor Wentworth to the Duke of Portland, respecting the arrival of the Maroons at Halifax, which was ordered to be laid upon the table, and a certain number of copies printed.

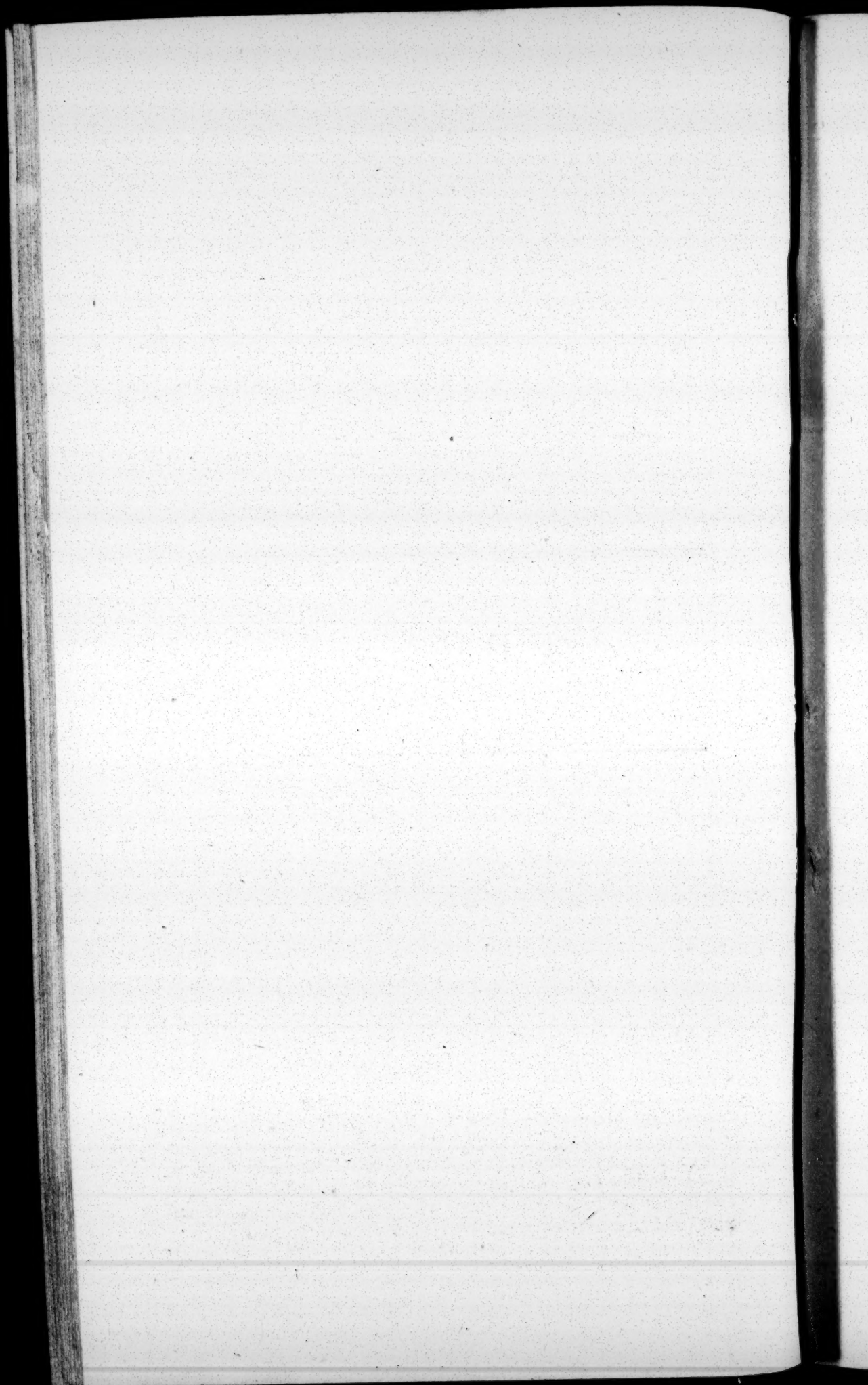
Mr. *Shaw Lefevre* moved for the second reading of the bill for the regulation of Weights and Measures, which being done, the bill was referred to a private Committee.

Mr. Secretary *Dundas* postponed the order of the day for the second reading of the bill to empower the East-India Company to administer Oaths to their Servants, to Monday se'nnight.

Adjourned.



APPENDIX.



APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

TREATIES, STATE PAPERS, PARLIAMENTARY
REPORTS, AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS, &c.

TREATY

BETWEEN HIS BRITANNIC MAJESTY AND THE LANDGRAVE OF
HESSE DARMSTADT, SIGNED AT FRANCFORT, THE 10TH DAY
OF JUNE, 1796.

BE it known to those whom it may concern, that his Majesty the King of Great Britain, and his Serene Highness the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, in consideration of the strict ties which unite their interests; and having judged, that in the present situation of affairs it would contribute to the reciprocal welfare of Great Britain, and of the dominions of Hesse Darmstadt, to cement and strengthen, by a new treaty of alliance, the connection which subsists between them, his Britannic Majesty, in order to regulate the objects relative to this Treaty, has thought proper to nominate Charles Craufurd, his envoy at the Imperial and Royal Armies; and his Serene Highness has nominated on his part, for the same purpose, the Baron Charles of Barckhaus, his Privy Counsellor, and Director of the Counsel of War; who, being furnished with the necessary full powers, have agreed to take for the basis of the present Treaty, the one formerly concluded between Great Britain and Hesse, the fifth of October, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, to adopt such parts of it as may be applicable to the present circumstances, or to settle, by new articles, those points which it may be necessary to regulate otherwise: and as it is not possible to specify each particular case, every thing which shall not appear to be determined in a precise manner, either in the present Treaty or in the former Treaty, shall be settled with equity and faith, in conformity to the same principles which have been adopted in former instances.

Article I. There shall be, therefore, in virtue of this Treaty between his Majesty the King of Great Britain and his Serene Highness the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt, their heirs and successors, a strict friendship, and a sincere, firm, and constant union, so that the one shall consider the interests of the other as his own, and shall strive to promote them with good faith as much as possible, and to prevent and remove all disturbance and injury.

Article II. His Majesty the King of Great Britain desiring to have in his service a body of troops, to be employed wherever he may think proper, excepting in the East Indies, or on board the Fleet; and his Serene Highness wishing for nothing more than to give his Majesty this fresh proof of his attachment, engages, by virtue of this article, to set on foot three battalions of Infantry, forming a body of two thousand two hundred and eighty-four men, according to the annexed specification: these troops shall be ready to pass in review before his Britannic Majesty's Commissary the fourteenth day of July of the present year, at Darmstadt, and to begin their march the following day for the place of their destination. The General whom his Britannic Majesty shall appoint Commander in Chief in the countries where these shall serve, shall have authority to employ them, either together or in detachments, and even to disperse them amongst the different islands or districts of his command, in the manner which he shall judge the most advantageous for his Majesty's service. It being, notwithstanding, well understood, that these troops shall always remain under the immediate orders of the own Chiefs. The said corps shall consist of men disciplined and exercised, and well armed and equipped.

Article III. In order to defray the expences to which the Serene Landgrave shall be put for the equipment of the said corps of troops, his Britannic Majesty promises to pay to his Serene Highness for each man thirty crowns banco, the crown being reckoned at fifty-three sols of Holland, or at four shillings and nine-pence three farthings English money, of which payment shall be made immediately after the review, and according to the effective state as shall then be verified. All the camp necessaries, as likewise all the horses, waggons, draft horses, valets de bat, and waggoners, who may be necessary for the troops, as well for transporting the equipages, provisions, ammunition, utensils, sick, and other objects of every kind, as for the field pieces with their implements, and artillery-men, shall be furnished by his Britannic Majesty, wherever they may be wanted.

Article IV. Besides the levy money stipulated in the preceding article, his Britannic Majesty shall cause to be paid to every officer, as also to every one employed, not a fighting man of equal rank, the sum of three months' pay according to his rank, and upon the same footing as his national troops, in order to facilitate the expence of his private equipment, which payment shall be made immediately after the signature of the present Treaty.

Article V. His Majesty the King of Great Britain engages himself, in like manner, to pay to the Serene Landgrave an annual subsidy during the six years this Treaty is to continue. This subsidy shall commence from the day of the signature, and it shall be paid at the rate eighty thousand crowns banco per annum.—The payment of this subsidy shall be made regularly, without abatement, every quarter, to the Agent of his Highness in London.

Article

Article VI. These troops shall remain in the service and at the disposition of his Britannic Majesty during six years, and his Majesty shall allow them during this term—

1. Every thing that is necessary for their subsistence, namely, pay, bread, forage, and, in general, all emoluments, as well ordinary as extraordinary, attached to every rank, on the same footing that he allows them to his British troops in the different places of their destination; and for this purpose the statements of payment shall be annexed to the present Treaty.

2. Medicines and sustenance for the sick and wounded, with a place and the necessary means of conveyance wherein they may be treated and taken care of, precisely on the same footing as the national British troops, by their own physicians and surgeons.

The pay shall commence from the day of the review, according to the effective state in which the said corps shall be delivered, which shall be verified by a table, signed by the respective Ministers of the high Contracting Parties, which shall have the same force as if it had been inserted word for word in the present Treaty.

Art. VII. As in the before mentioned table the strength of each company, of which four make a battalion, amounts to one hundred and sixty-three soldiers, it must be observed, that in this number are comprised seven men, unarmed, intended, according to the established custom in the Hessian service, to serve as servants to officers, and it is agreed upon that these men shall nevertheless pass muster as soldiers in every respect.

Art. VIII. As it is to be feared that, notwithstanding the care made use of, it will not be possible entirely to prevent desertion until the arrival of the troops at the place of embarkation, and his Serene Highness promising to employ every means in his power that the said corps shall be embarked complete, it is agreed upon, that there shall be at the said review ten supernumerary men per company to supply the place of deserters on the march; so that, in case, on the arrival of the corps at the port, the number of the supernumeraries shall exceed that of the deserters, the remainder may be distributed amongst the battalions, and added to the amount, in order to encrease, in such case, the levy money, pay, &c. and his Highness engages himself moreover to cause the said corps to be escorted by a detachment of cavalry, in order to pick up deserters, procure quarters, &c. &c. It being well understood that the expenses as well of the march as of the return of the detachment of cavalry, shall be defrayed by his Majesty.

Art. IX. All the objects of pay and maintenance shall be calculated according to the table of the annual review, so that the vacancies happening from one review to another shall not make any alteration in the state of payment. His Majesty shall cause these objects to be paid in advance from two to two months, either by assignments payable in favour of the Hessian Commissioner upon whatever chest of his Majesty which may be nearest to the said Commission,

Commission, or in ready money to his Serene Highness's Agent in London.

Art. X. A fresh review shall take place regularly every year, his Majesty shall give three months' notice of the number of recruits necessary to complete the corps, which number shall be fixed according to the official report of the first day of April, so that the recruits shall be ready to be delivered to the English Commissary the first day of July, at the place of the first review, or one month after, at such port in Germany, or at such place on the frontiers of the empire as his Majesty may chuse for their reception. The term of their delivery shall be deemed to be that of the new review, and the total of the number of effective men remaining, according to the report of the month of April, added to that of the recruits delivered to the British Commissary, and shall be considered as the effective state of the new period, and shall not vary until the review of the following year.

Art. XI. There shall be paid for each recruit armed, equipped, disciplined, and exercised, the sum of twenty crowns banco; and his Highness the Landgrave takes upon himself the expences of transport to the place of embarkation, as well as of escort, which are to be reimbursed by his Britannic Majesty.

Art. XII. As, during the continuance of this Treaty, it will necessarily occur, that officers or soldiers, either for family reasons, on account of preferment, or for sickness, will be obliged to return home, his Majesty takes upon himself the expences of their transport in the two former cases, as far as the frontiers of the empire, and in the latter, to their own country. His Highness promises, in return, to replace the non-commissioned officers and soldiers to whom he may give permission to return for any other reason than that of sickness at his own expence, and without requiring the consideration for recruits fixed in the preceding article, reserving to himself nothing but the transport from the frontiers of the empire unto the place of their destination.—Moreover, his Highness will never recal an officer or soldier without urgent cause, or without having acquainted his Majesty thereof; and he will take care that the number of officers shall be always complete.

Art. XIII. The most Serene Landgrave being at the charge of furnishing the said corps with arms and cloathing, in consequence of the pay upon the footing of English troops, as agreed upon in these articles, his Majesty shall cause indemnification to be made for such loss only in cloathing, arms, and accoutrements, as shall be occasioned by some accident of war, or of voyage; as well as for every expence incurred in the transport of these several articles to the troops, and also of every thing they may stand in need of. It being well understood, that the aforesaid articles shall be delivered to the English Commissary at the same time as the recruits of the year, in order that the same vessel may convey both.

Art. XIV. In case an officer should lose his equipage, either on his route, or by some accident of war, his Majesty shall grant him the same indemnification as English officers are allowed in similar cases.

Art. XV. As soon as his Serene Highness shall have put the corps in a state to march, within the term agreed upon, he shall be considered as having fulfilled his preliminary engagements; so that the payment of the levy money, subsidy, and pay, shall take place according to the aforesaid determination, even in case his Majesty, on account of some unforeseen event, should not think proper to have the corps reviewed, or to cause it to march or embark.

Art. XVI. If before the period of the review his Britannic Majesty shall find himself disposed to renounce this Treaty entirely, his Serene Highness shall receive, under the title of indemnification,

- 1st. The levy money.
- 2d. The equipage money allowed to the officers.
- 3d. Three months pay for the whole of the troops, according to the table annexed to the second article, &c.
- 4th. One year's subsidy.

Art. XVII. At the end of six years, his Britannic Majesty shall send back the corps, at the disposal of his Highness, in the same state in which it was taken into his service, and being at the entire expence of transport until their arrival at Darmstadt. It being understood that his Majesty shall not pay the levy money for the men who may be wanting at that time, except in the case where he shall have failed to inform the Serene Landgrave of it six months beforehand, in order to save his Highness the expence of a new completion. If by accident the return should be retarded, the Treaty shall be tacitly prolonged for one year, in every respect, and a certain sum shall be agreed upon as an equivalent for levy money, in proportion to the present arrangement.

Art. XVIII. If his Majesty should think proper, after the expiration of the six years fixed for the duration of this Treaty, to keep the said corps for some years longer, his Highness consents to it before-hand; and it will be then only necessary to make an arrangement respecting the levy and equipage money for the officers, which will be calculated according to the proportions of the present Treaty.

Art. XIX. His Serene Highness reserves to himself the jurisdiction over his troops, as well as all dispositions respecting promotion, discipline, and inferior administration.

Art. XX. His Britannic Majesty grants to his Highness the sum of fifteen thousand pounds sterling, to answer the first expences of equipping this corps; payment of which shall be made immediately after the signature of this Treaty, and shall be carried to the account of levy money.

Art.

Art. XXI. Deferters shall be faithfully delivered up on both sides, and neither the foldiers, nor any other persons belonging to the corps of Hesse Darmstadt, shall be permitted to settle in the dominions of his Britannic Majesty.

In witness whereof, we the undersigned, authorised by the full power of his Majesty the King of Great Britain on one side, and of his Serene Highness the Reigning Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt on the other, have signed the present Treaty, and have caused the Seals of our Arms to be affixed thereto.

Done at Frankfort, this 10th of June, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Six.

(L. S.)
(L. S.)

C. CRAUFURD.
C. B. DE BARKHAUS.

BANK OF ENGLAND, Oct. 26th, 1796.

An ACCOUNT of the Amount of MONEY advanced by the Bank of England for the PUBLIC SERVICE, and outstanding on the 1st October, 1796.

		l.	l.	s.	d.
On Land	1794	141,000	—	—	
Do.	1795	646,000	—	—	
Do.	1796	2,000,000	—	—	
					2,787,000 — —
Malt	1794	196,000	—	—	
Do.	1795	328,000	—	—	
Do.	1796	750,000	—	—	
					1,274,000 — —
Consol. Fund	1795	1,054,000	—	—	
Do.	1796	1,323,000	—	—	
Further Supply	1795	650,000	—	—	
Vote of Credit	1796	817,200	—	—	
					3,844,200 — —
					7,905,200 — —
Exchequer Bills without Interest	-				376,739 — 9
					8,281,939 — 9
Treasury Bills of Exchange	/ -				901,957 6 6
					£. 9,183,896 7 3

A. NEWLAND,
Chief Cashier.

An

An ACCOUNT of the BOUNTIES paid to SEAMEN in the several ports of Great Britain, pursuant to the Act of the 35th of his Majesty, cap. 9. from the commencement of the said act to the 10th October 1795, and from the 10th October 1795 to the 10th October 1796.

Year ending 10th Oct. 1795	—	£.116,935	2	9½
Year ending 10th Oct. 1796	—	51,491	9	—½

THOMAS IRVING, Inspector General of
the Imports and Exports of Great Britain.

Inspector General's Office,
Custom House, London,
27th Oct. 1796.

REPORT

OF THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON
THE AFFAIRS OF THE BANK.

The Committee appointed to examine and state the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the funds for discharging the same, and to report the result thereof to the House, together with their opinion on the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance, for a time to be limited, of measures taken in pursuance of the Minute in Council on the 26th of February last, and who are empowered to report their proceedings from time to time, have, pursuant to the order of the House, proceeded to examine into the several matters referred to their consideration, and have unanimously agreed upon the following report, viz.

Your Committee have examined the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the funds for discharging the same, and think it their duty, without loss of time, to state those total amounts, and to report the result thereof to the House.

Your Committee find, upon such examination, that the total amount of the out-standing demands on the Bank, on the 25th of February last (to which day the accounts completely could be made up), was 13,770,390l. And that the total amount of the funds for discharging those demands (not including the permanent debt due from Government of 11,686,800l. which bears an interest of three per cent.) was on the same 25th day of February last 17,597,280l. and that the result is, that there was on the 25th day of February last a surplus of effects belonging to the Bank, beyond the amount of their debts, amounting to the sum of 3,826,890l. exclusive of the above-mentioned permanent debt of 11,686,800l. due from Government.

And your Committee further represent, that since the 25th of February last considerable issues have been made by the Bank in Bank notes, both upon Government securities and in discounting

Bills, the particulars of which could not immediately be made up ; but as those issues appear to your Committee to have been made upon corresponding securities, taken with the usual care and attention, the actual balance in favour of the Bank did not appear to your Committee to have been thereby diminished.

SECOND REPORT

OF THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

That, in their opinion, it is necessary to provide for the confirmation and continuance, for a time to be limited, of the measures taken in pursuance of the Order of Council on the 16th of February last ; submitting to the wisdom of Parliament to determine for what limited time it may be necessary that those measures should be continued.

THE FIRST REPORT

From the Committee of Secrecy, appointed by the House of Lords to examine and state the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the funds for discharging the same, and to report the result thereof to the House, together with their opinion on the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of measures taken in pursuance of the Minute of Council, on the twenty-sixth of February last.

That the Committee having, in pursuance of the order of the House, proceeded to take into their consideration the several matters referred to them, have agreed to report thereon as follows :

With respect to the first part of the order of the House, by which they are directed to examine and report the total amount of out-standing demands on the Bank of England, and likewise of the funds for discharging the same, they called upon the Governor of the Bank, and upon Mr. Bosanquet, one of the Directors of the Bank (who attended them in the absence of the Deputy Governor), for an account to that effect ; which account having by them been produced to the Committee, was verified by the Deputy Accountant of the Bank ; and the same having been examined by the Committee, it was agreed to report the result thereof to the House as follows :

That the total amount of the outstanding demands on the Bank, on the 25th of February last, was 13,770,390*l.* and that the total amount of the funds for discharging those demands, over and above the permanent debt due from Government of 11,686,800*l.* was, on the same day of February last, 17,597,280*l.* and that the result is, that there was, on the 25th day of February last, a surplus of effects belonging to the Bank beyond the total of their debts, amounting to the sum of 3,826,890*l.* over and above the before-mentioned permanent debt of 11,686,800*l.* due from Government.

The Committee think it right to observe, that this account is made up to the 25th of February inclusive ; and that since that day several

several considerable issues have been made by the Bank in Bank notes, both upon Government securities, and in discounting bills, the particulars of which could not be immediately made up; but that, as those issues were made upon corresponding securities, taken with the usual care and attention, the actual balance in favour of the Bank has not been materially varied, but, if at all, has been rather increased.

In proceeding to the consideration of the second part of the order of reference, in which the Committee are directed to report to the House their opinion on the necessity of providing for the confirmation and continuance of the measures taken in pursuance of the Minute of Council of the 26th of February, the Committee have thought it right to confine their enquiries to those points only on which that necessity appeared to them principally to depend; and having examined to these points the Governor of the Bank, and the said Mr. Bosanquet, one of the Directors thereof, the Committee find,

That the Bank of England has lately experienced an unusual drain of cash.

That this drain was owing, in great part, to demands for cash from the country; such demands being made upon the Bank indirectly from the country, but directly from the bankers of London, who are to supply the country.

That by the effect of this drain the cash of the Bank has been of late very considerably reduced; that it has, however, been known, by those conversant in the affairs of the Bank, to be a great deal lower; but that on this occasion the rapidity of the demands has been unparalleled.

That these demands have been of late progressively increasing, but particularly in the last week; and that in the two last days of the week the demands exceeded those of the four preceding days.

That there was every reason to apprehend that these demands, and the consequent progressive reduction of cash, would continue, and even increase.

That by the effect of such reduction, if it were to continue in the same, or in a still further increased proportion, the Bank of England would be deprived of the means of supplying the cash which might be necessary for pressing exigencies of public service; and this led the Bank to make the communication they did to his Majesty's Ministers.

And lastly, that since the date of the Minute of Council above-mentioned, no such alteration has occurred as materially to vary the situation of the Bank in this respect.

On this view of the present state of the important question referred to them, the Committee have agreed to report it to the House as their opinion, that it is necessary to continue and confirm the measures already taken, for such time, and under such limitations and restrictions, and with such power of discontinuing the same, as to the wisdom of Parliament may seem expedient.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Resolved,

That a sum, not exceeding two hundred thousand pounds, be granted to his Majesty, upon account, to enable his Majesty to make a temporary advance, by way of loan, for the service of the Emperor.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, the sum of thirteen millions be raised by annuities, in manner following, that is to say,

That every contributor to the said sum of thirteen millions, shall for every 100*l.* contributed and paid, be entitled to the principal sum of 125*l.* in annuities, after the rate of 3*l.* per centum, to commence from the 5th day of January 1797, and to be added to, and made one joint stock with, the 3*l.* per centum annuities, consolidated by the acts of the 25th, 28th, 29th, 32d, and 33d, years of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Second, and by several subsequent acts, and to be payable and transferrable at the Bank of England at the same time and in the same manner, and subject to the like redemption by Parliament, as the said 3*l.* per cent. consolidated annuities are payable and transferrable there. That every contributor shall also be entitled to the further principal sum of 50*l.* in 3*l.* per centum reduced annuities, to commence from the 5th day of April 1797, and to be added to, and made joint stock with, certain other reduced annuities, after the rate of 3*l.* per centum, and to be payable and transferrable at the Bank of England at the same time and in the same manner, and subject to the like redemption by Parliament, as the said 3*l.* per centum reduced annuities are payable and transferrable there. That every contributor shall also be entitled to the further principal sum of 20*l.* in annuities, after the rate of 4*l.* per centum, to commence from the 5th day of April 1797, and to be added to, and made one joint stock with, certain annuities, after the rate of 4*l.* per centum, which were consolidated by the acts of the 20th, 21st, 22d, 23d, and 24th, years of the reign of his present Majesty, and to be payable and transferrable at the Bank of England at the same time and in the same manner, and subject to the like redemption by Parliament, as the said 4*l.* per centum consolidated annuities are payable and transferrable there. That every contributor shall likewise be entitled to an annuity of 6*s.* 6*d.* per centum, to commence from the 5th day of April 1797, and to continue for the term of sixty-two years and nine months, and then to cease, over and above the principal sums of 125*l.* and 50*l.* after the rate of 3*l.* per centum per annum, and 20*l.* after the rate of 4*l.* per centum per annum, in respect of every 100*l.* to be contributed and paid towards raising the said sum of thirteen millions; which annuity of 6*s.* 6*d.* per centum, so to continue for sixty-two years and nine months, shall be added to, and made one joint stock with, certain annuities, payable at the Bank of England, which were granted for the several
terms

terms of ninety-nine, ninety-eight, eighty, seventy eight, seventy-seven years, seventy-five years and a half, sixty-nine years and a quarter, sixty-six years and a quarter, sixty-five years and a quarter, and sixty-four years and a quarter, and were, by the acts of the 4th, 20th, and 22d, years of his present Majesty, and by several subsequent acts, consolidated and made one joint stock of annuities, and shall be payable, paid, and transferrable, at the same time and in the same manner as the said annuities, so consolidated by the acts of the 4th, 20th, and 22d, years of the reign of his present Majesty, are payable and transferrable at the Bank of England. That the said several annuities, after the rate of 3l. per centum, 4l. per centum, and 6s. 6d. per centum, so to be payable as aforesaid, shall be charged and chargeable upon, and payable out of, the consolidated fund. That every contributor shall, on or before the 28th day of this instant April, make a deposit of 10l. per centum on such sum as he or she shall chuse to subscribe towards raising the said sum of thirteen millions, with the chief Cashier or Cashiers of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, as a security for making the future payments on, or before, the days or times hereinafter mentioned, that is to say,

- 10l. per centum on or before the 26th day of May next.
- 15l. per centum on or before the 21st day of June next.
- 10l. per centum on or before the 18th day of July next.
- 10l. per centum on or before the 15th day of August next.
- 10l. per centum on or before the 15th day of September next.
- 15l. per centum on or before the 17th day of October next.
- 10l. per centum on or before the 27th day of Nov. next, and
- 10l. per centum on or before the 29th day of December next.

That every contributor, who shall be possessed of any Exchequer bill, or bills, made out by virtue of an act passed in the present session of Parliament, intituled " An Act for raising the sum of eighteen millions by way of Annuities," and which were dated previous to the 21st day of January 1797, or any such Exchequer bills which shall have been issued since the 7th day of April 1797, according to the numbers, and for the sums as follows, videlicet,

No. 2,489 to 2,493	dated 7 Ap. 1797,	of 100l. each	£. 500
3,011 to 3,023	— 11 — — —	500l. each	6,500
3,024 to 3,177	— 12 — — —	ool. each	77,000
3,178 to 3,223	— 12 — — —	500l. each	23,000
2,201 to 2,250	— 13 — — —	200l. each	50,000
2,251 to 2,291	— 15 — — —	200l. each	8,200
3,301 to 3,338	— 15 — — —	500l. each	19,000
2,292 to 2,350	— 15 — — —	200l. each	11,800
3,339 to 3,400	— 15 — — —	500l. each	61,000
2,351 to 2,625	— 26 — — —	200l. each	55,000
3,561 to 3,780	— 26 — — —	500l. each	10,000

£. 422,000
shall

shall be at liberty to pay, or deliver in the same, as a deposit on his contribution towards the said sum of thirteen millions; and such Exchequer bill, or bills, shall be received as money by the Cashier, or Cashiers, of the said Governor and Company, and placed as such to the credit of the contributor, or contributors, paying or delivering in the same. That all the monies and Exchequer bills so to be received by the Cashier, or Cashiers, of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, shall be paid and delivered into the receipt of the Exchequer: which monies, so paid in, shall be applied from time to time to such services as shall then have been voted by this House in this session of Parliament. That every contributor who shall pay in the whole of his, or her, contribution money towards the said sum of thirteen millions at any time on or before the 17th day of November next, shall be allowed an interest, by way of discount, after the rate of 4l. per centum per annum on the sum so completing his or her contribution respectively, to be computed from the day of completing the same to the 29th day of December, 1797. That every contributor towards raising the said sum of thirteen millions shall, in proportion to every 100l. so contributed and paid, contribute a further proportional sum to any loan, not exceeding five millions, which shall be made by virtue of an act, or acts, to be passed in the present session of Parliament. That, in case provision shall not be made by any act, or acts, to be passed in the present session of Parliament, for a loan to the further amount of five millions over and above the said thirteen millions, a deduction of sixpence shall be made from the amount of the annuity of 6s. 6d. per centum herein before mentioned for every million, by which the total amount of such further loan, or loans, shall be less than five millions. And that every contributor towards raising the sum of thirteen millions herein before mentioned shall, at the time of making his deposit of 10l. per centum on such sum as he shall chuse to subscribe towards the said sum of thirteen millions, also deposit such a further sum towards raising any further loan or loans, not exceeding five millions, as shall bear the same proportion to the sum of five millions, which his deposit of 10l. per centum, towards raising the sum of thirteen millions, shall bear to the said sum of thirteen millions. And that, if provision shall not be made by any act or acts to be passed in this session of Parliament, before the second payment to be made on the loan of thirteen millions, for raising such further loan or loans to the full additional amount of five millions, the excess of each additional sum so to be deposited by every contributor, over and above the proportional deposit on any such further loan or loans, less in the whole than five millions, shall be carried to the account of such contributor, and deemed a part of the second payment, to be made by him towards raising the sum of thirteen millions. And that, if provision shall not be made in like manner towards raising any part of the said additional amount of five millions, the whole of each additional sum, so to be deposited as aforesaid by every contributor,

tributor, shall be carried to the account of such contributor, and deemed part of the second payment to be made by him towards raising the said loan of thirteen millions.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any entry, minute, or memorandum, of any admission into any corporation or company, in the court book, roll, or record of such corporation or company.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any admission into any of the Inns of Court or Inns of Chancery.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a further duty of four pounds two shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any admission into any of the Four Inns of Court.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of eight pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any admittance, or instrument for admitting, of any fellow of the College of Physicians, or of any attorney, clerk, advocate, proctor, notary, or other officer, in any Court whatsoever, in Great Britain (not being an annual officer in the court of any corporation, or inferior court, whose office is under the value of 10*l.* per annum in salary, fees, and perquisites).

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of five shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any award.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of twelve shillings and sixpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any beneficial warrant or order under the sign manual of his Majesty, his heirs, or successors.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of one shilling be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any bill or note of lading which shall be signed for any goods or merchandize to be exported.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any bond, not otherwise charged, except bail bonds and assignments thereof, and except bonds exempted from the duties on stamped vellum, parchment, and paper, by an act passed in the thirty-second year of the reign of his present Majesty,

jeſty, for the relief of the coaſt trade of Great Britain, and for exempting certain coaſt documents from ſtamp duties.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of two ſhillings be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, or ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed, or written, any certificate or debenture, for drawing back any cuſtoms or duties, or any part of any cuſtoms or duties, for or in reſpect of the re-ſhipping or exporting any goods or merchandize from Great Britain.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of fix pounds be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, or ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed, or written, any collation to be made by any archbiſhop or other biſhop, or any preſentation or donation which ſhall paſs the great ſeal of Great Britain, or which ſhall be made by any patron whatſoever of or to any benefice, dignity, or ſpiritual or eccleſiaſtical promotion whatſoever.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of ten ſhillings be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed, or written, any conveyance, ſurrender of grants or offices, releaſe, or other deed whatſoever, which ſhall be enrolled of record in any of the courts of Weſtminſter, or in any other court of record whatſoever, or by any cuſtos rotulorum, or clerk of the peace.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of ten pounds be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, or ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed or written, any diſpenſation to hold two eccleſiaſtical dignities or benefices, or both a dignity and benefice, or any other diſpenſation or faculty, from the Lord Archbiſhop of Canterbury, or the Maſter of the Faculties for the time being.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of one pound be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, or ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed, or written, any exemplification whatſoever, that ſhall paſs the ſeal of any court.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of eight pounds be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, or ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed, or written, any grant or letters patent under the great ſeal of Great Britain, or the ſeal of the duchy or county palatine of Lancaſter, or of any honour, dignity, promotion, franchise, liberty, or privilege, to any perſon or perſons, bodies politic or corporate, or any exemplification of the ſame.

That, towards raiſing the ſupply granted to his Maſteſty, a duty of fix pounds be charged upon every ſkin or piece of vellum or parchment, or ſheet or piece of paper, upon which ſhall be engroſſed, printed, or written, any grant from his Maſteſty, his heirs or ſucceſſors,

successors, of any sum of money exceeding one hundred pounds which shall pass the great seal or privy seal, not directed to the great seal.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of six pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any grant of lands in fee, lease for years, or other grant of profit, not particularly charged, that shall pass the great seal, the seal of Exchequer, the seal of the duchy or county palatine of Lancaster, or privy seal, not directed to the great seal.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of fifteen shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any institution or licence that shall pass the seal of any archbishop or bishop, chancellor or other ordinary, or any ecclesiastical court whatsoever in England, or any writ or instrument for the like purpose, with any such institution or licence, that shall be passed or made by any presbytery or other spiritual power in Scotland.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two shillings and sixpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any inventory or catalogue of any furniture, goods, or effects, made with reference to any agreement, or for the security of any person, not otherwise charged.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of fifteen shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any letters of mart.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of five shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any licence or certificate of marriage (except of the marriage of a widow of a seaman or common soldier).

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any matriculation of a person in either of the two universities in England.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of six pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any pardon (except the general circuit of Newgate pardons) of or for any crime or offence, or of any sum of money or forfeiture whatsoever, or any warrant of reprieve, or relaxation from any pecuniary fine or forfeiture exceeding one hundred pounds, or from any corporal punishment.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty

of one shilling be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any passport.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two shillings and sixpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any protest, or other notarial act whatever.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of ten shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed or written, any recognizance, statute staple, or statute merchant.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any register, entry, testimonial, or certificate, of any degree taken in either of the two universities in England.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of fourteen pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any register, entry, testimonial, or certificate, of any degree in any Inn of Court.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any surrender of, or admittance to, any copyhold land or tenement (except such copyhold land or tenement as shall not exceed the clear yearly value of twenty shillings, and also except the original surrender to the use of a will), or any grant or lease by copy of court roll, or any other copy of the court roll of any honour or manor (other than the court roll or book wherein the proceedings of the court are entered and enrolled).

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any copy of a surrender of, or admittance to, any custom right or tenant right estate, not being copyhold, which shall pass by surrender and admittance, or by admittance only, and which shall not pass by deed, except such custom right or tenant right estates as shall not exceed the clear yearly value of twenty shillings.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of ten shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any transfer of stock in any company, society, or corporation.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty
of

of fifteen shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, a writ of covenant for levying a fine, or any writ of entry for suffering a common recovery.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings and ninepence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any principal or original instrument of surrender or resignation of any messuages, houses, lands, tenements, hereditaments, tythes, mills, fishings, and other heretable rights, or any of them, to be made to any of his Majesty's subjects, who are, or shall be, the superiors thereof, or to any city, town, burgh, or corporation, or to any magistrates, or others, who have power to receive such surrenders or resignations, in Scotland.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings and ninepence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any charter or resignation, confirmation, novodamus, or charter, upon apprizing or adjudication, made or granted by such superior, or others, as aforesaid, in Scotland.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings and ninepence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any principal or original retour of any service of heirs, or any precept of clare constat of lands or tenements holding of any subject as aforesaid in Scotland.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings and ninepence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any principal or original saisine, taken or following upon a mortgage, wadset, heretable bond, alienation, or disposition, or upon any charter, precept of clare constat, retours, apprizings, or adjudications, of lands or tenements holding of any subject as aforesaid in Scotland.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of four shillings and ninepence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any principal or original instrument of surrender or resignation, service or cognition of heirs, charter of saisine of any houses, lands, tenements, or hereditaments, holding burgage tenure in Scotland.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of threepence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any copy of any will.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty

of fourpence be charged upon every almanack or calendar for one particular year, or for any time less than a year.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two shillings and sixpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any citation or monition, made in any ecclesiastical court, or any libel, allegation, deposition, or inventory, exhibited in any ecclesiastical court, the courts of admiralty, or cinque ports.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any answer exhibited in any ecclesiastical court, the courts of admiralty, or cinque ports.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any copy of any citation, monition, or answer, made in any ecclesiastical court, the courts of admiralty, or cinque ports.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two shillings and sixpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any copy of any libel, allegation, deposition, or inventory, exhibited in any ecclesiastical court, the courts of admiralty, or cinque ports.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any sentence or final decree exhibited in any ecclesiastical court, the courts of admiralty, or cinque ports, or any copy thereof.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of five shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any personal decree, warrant, or monition, in any court of admiralty, or the cinque ports, or any copy thereof.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of ten shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any sentence that shall be given in the courts of admiralty, either in England or Scotland, or the cinque ports, exercising admiralty jurisdiction, or any attachment that shall be made out of the said courts of admiralty, or any relaxation of any such attachment.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of six pounds be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment,

parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any appeal from the high courts of admiralty, either in England or Scotland, the court of arches, or the prerogative courts of Canterbury or York.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of five shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any commission issuing out of any ecclesiastical court in Great Britain.

That, toward raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of one penny half-penny be charged for and upon every newspaper, or paper containing public news, intelligence, or occurrences, printed in Great Britain, to be dispersed and made public, whether the same be contained in a half sheet or any less piece of paper, or in any paper larger than half a sheet.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any agreement, for which the stamp duties of six shillings and of one shilling are charged by two acts of the 23d and 35th years of the reign of his present Majesty.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any bond given as a security for money, the amount whereof shall not exceed one hundred pounds, and a duty of ten shillings where the amount shall exceed one hundred pounds and shall not amount to five hundred pounds, and a duty of fifteen shillings where the amount shall be of the value of five hundred pounds or upwards; and the further duty of ten shillings where the amount shall be of the value of one thousand pounds or upwards; and the further duty of one pound where the amount shall be of the value of two thousand pounds or upwards; and the further duty of two pounds where the amount shall be of the value of five thousand pounds or upwards.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of three shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any indenture, lease, or other deed, not otherwise charged, for which a stamp duty of one shilling is payable by an act made in the 35th year of the reign of his present Majesty (except indentures for binding poor, parish, or charity children apprentices).

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of two pounds and ten shillings be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any probate of a will, or letters of administration, for any estate of or above the value of three hundred pounds; and a further duty of one pound and ten shillings

shillings where the estate is of or above the value of six hundred pounds; and a further duty of two pounds where the estate is of or above the value of one thousand pounds; and a further duty of four pounds where the estate is of or above the value of two thousand pounds; and a further duty of five pounds where the estate is of or above the value of five thousand pounds; and a further duty of five pounds where the estate is of or above the value of ten thousand pounds.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of one penny be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any bill of exchange, draft, or order for the payment of money on demand, where the sum expressed therein shall amount to forty shillings, and shall not exceed five pounds and five shillings; and a duty of twopence where such sum shall exceed five pounds and five shillings and shall not exceed thirty pounds; and a duty of threepence where such sum shall exceed thirty pounds and shall not exceed fifty pounds; and a duty of fourpence where such sum shall exceed fifty pounds and shall not exceed one hundred pounds; and a duty of sixpence where such sum shall exceed one hundred pounds and shall not exceed two hundred pounds.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of twopence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any bill of exchange, draft, or order, payable otherwise than on demand, where the sum expressed therein, or made payable thereby, shall amount to forty shillings and shall not exceed thirty pounds; and a duty of threepence where such sum shall exceed thirty pounds and shall not exceed fifty pounds; and a duty of fourpence where such sum shall exceed fifty pounds and shall not exceed one hundred pounds; and a duty of sixpence where such sum shall exceed one hundred pounds and shall not exceed two hundred pounds.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of eightpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any bill of exchange whatever, where the sum expressed therein, or made payable thereby, shall exceed two hundred pounds.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, the sum of sixpence be charged yearly for every sum of one hundred pounds, and so in proportion for any greater or less sum, that is or shall be insured by any person in or by any policy of assurance for insuring houses, furniture, goods, wares, merchandize, or other property, from loss by fire, in Great Britain.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, there be charged for and upon all gold plate which shall be imported or brought into, or which shall be made or wrought within, the
kingdom

kingdom of Great Britain, and which shall or ought to be touched, assayed, and marked, in Great Britain, a duty of eight shillings for every ounce troy, and so in proportion for every greater or less quantity.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, there be charged for and upon all silver plate, which shall be imported or brought into, or which shall be made or wrought within, the kingdom of Great Britain, and which shall or ought to be touched, assayed, or marked, in Great Britain, a duty of sixpence for every ounce troy, and so in proportion for any greater or less quantity.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, a duty of six shillings and eightpence be charged upon every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper, upon which shall be engrossed, printed, or written, any copy, purporting to be a true copy, or attested to be a true copy, of any indenture, lease, or other deed, or any part thereof, for the security or use of any person, other than the person having, or being entitled to, the custody of such indenture, lease, or other deed.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, there be charged a duty of fourpence for every twenty shillings of the purchase money which shall arise, or be payable, by virtue of any sale of any interest in possession, remainder, or reversion, in any freehold, copyhold, customary, or leasehold lands, tenements, houses, or hereditaments, in Great Britain, or of any annuities or sums charged thereon.

That, towards raising the supply granted to his Majesty, there be charged a sum equal to the tolls now payable for carriages, horses, and other cattle, of every description, passing through any turnpike gate or bar already erected, or hereafter to be erected, by virtue of any act or acts of parliament now in being, or that shall hereafter be passed, for making or repairing roads in Great Britain, at the respective gates or bars, in addition to the tolls already paid there.

That a Bill or Bills be brought in upon the said resolutions: and that Mr. *Douglas*, Mr. *Chancellor of the Exchequer*, the Earl of *Morington*, Mr. *John Thomas Townshend*, Mr. *John Smyth*, Mr. *Attorney General*, Mr. *Solicitor General*, Mr. *Rose*, Mr. *Long*, and Mr. *Hobart*, do prepare and bring in the same.

An ACCOMPT of the total produce of the Duties of CUSTOMS, EXCISE, STAMPS, and INCIDENTS, respectively, for one Year, ended the 5th day of July 1796; distinguishing (as far as possible) in each branch, the produce on every separate article, the duties on which have amounted to one thousand pounds, or more, in the four quarters of the said year, viz.

The total produce of the duties of Customs	£.	s.	d.
for one year, ended the 5th day of July			
1796, as per accompt (A.)	—	3,669,219	7 9½
			Ditto

	£.	s.	d.
• Ditto of the Excise for one year, ended ditto (exclusive of 545,944l. the produce of the annual malt duties) as per accmpt (B.)	8,292,385	15	2½
Ditto of the stamp duties for one year, ended ditto, as per accmpt (C.) —	1,697,226	8	6
Ditto of incidents at the receipt of the Ex- chequer, for one year, ended ditto, as per accmpt (D.) — —	2,387,849	3	8
	<u>16,046,680</u>	15	1½

Memorandum.

l. s. d.

In the sum of 2,387,849 3 8 stated as the amount of inci-
dents at the Exchequer, is included 367,889l. 10s. 6½d.
being the amount of imprests and other monies paid within
the above period.

Presented, pursuant to an act of the 27th year of his present
Majesty's reign, the 20th day of October 1796, by

GEORGE ROSE.

An ACCOUNT of BILLS of EXCHANGE accepted by, or by
the direction, or on account of, the Lords Commissioners of his
Majesty's Treasury, made payable and paid at the Bank of Eng-
land, from the 1st January to the 31st day of December 1796.

Bills drawn from the West Indies, &c.	£.3,957,541	6	11
Do. by Brook Watson, Esq. Commissary General	4,796,	11	6
Do. by Henry Motz, Esq. Deputy Com- missary General	<u>537,315</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>7</u>
		542,112	9 1
Do. by Messrs. Crau- furd's with the army on the Continent — — —		312,958	3 7
Do. by Messrs. Boyd, Benfield, and Co. — — —		273,878	11 8
Do. by Walter Boyd, Jun. Esq. — — —		200,000	— —
Do. by Claude Scott, Esq. for flour and wheat purchased on account of Govern- ment	147,681	4	2

Do.

Brought forward	£. 147,681	4	2	5,286,490	11	3
Do. by fundries, and accepted by Claude Scott, Esq. for the like service						
	211,872	18	10			

359,554 3 —

Due to the Bank the 31st December 1795	£. 5,646,044	14	3
	1,418,960	19	3

Repaid in the year 1796, on account of the above	£. 7,065,005	13	6
	5,889,356	—	9

Due to the Bank the 31st December 1796	£. 1,175,649	12	9
Bank of England, Feb. 14, 1797.	<i>A. Newland, Chief Cashier.</i>		

No. 1.—Copy of a RESOLUTION of the Court of Directors of the Bank of England, dated 3d December 1795.

Resolved, That the following Resolution of the Court be communicated to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

That the Court of Directors, after a very solemn deliberation, adequate to the importance of the subject, are unanimously of opinion, that should such a loan* take place, they are but too well grounded in declaring (from the actual effects of the Emperor's last loan, and the continued drains of specie and bullion they still experience) that they have the most cogent reasons to apprehend very momentous and alarming consequences.

They are therefore led to hope (after expressing their acknowledgments to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for having hinted that the welfare and safety of the Bank should in this matter supersede every other consideration) that he will be pleased to lay aside the adoption of such a measure, which they beg leave to repeat, would be in their opinion most fatal in its consequences.

No. 2.—Copy of an OPINION of the Committee of Treasury, 14th January 1796.

It is the opinion of the Committee of Treasury, that the Governor and Deputy Governor should represent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, That they cannot look upon the scheme of assisting the Emperor to raise a loan in Germany, by the guarantee of the Parliament of Great Britain, in any light which will not, one way or other, be detrimental to this country, even if a law were passed by Parliament to prevent British subjects taking any share therein.

That such a call for money in Germany will occasion demands of it from hence. Germans, Italian, and other foreign capitalists, who have property here, will be induced to draw it away.

People in Holland, who by the late acts have money locked up here, may go to Germany, and draw it from thence.

That funds, which would otherwise be employed in speculations of trade with England, may, by such an opportunity of investment at home, be diverted from the one to the other purpose.

That the exchange between this country and Hamburg may be much affected by it.

* Viz. a loan of £. 3,000,000 to the Emperor.

That, in spite of legal prohibitions, it is to be apprehended that some people here would take shares in such a negociation, under the names of their foreign correspondents.

From these and other causes, they are fully of opinion, that the Governor and Deputy Governor can give no advice to Mr. Pitt in favour of such a measure; which is indeed of a wide political extent, and beyond the line of their duty to judge of.

No. 3.—Copy of a RESOLUTION, dated 11th February 1796.

Resolved,

That it is the opinion of this Court, founded upon its experience of the effects of the late Imperial Loan, That if any further loan or advance of money to the Emperor, or to any other foreign state, should in the present state of affairs take place, it will in all probability prove fatal to the Bank of England.

The Court of Directors do therefore most earnestly deprecate the adoption of any such measure; and they solemnly protest against any responsibility for the calamitous consequences that may follow therefrom.—Resolved,

That the Governor and Deputy Governor do communicate these Resolutions to the Chancellor of his Majesty's Exchequer.

ANSWERS of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Two Resolutions of the Court of Directors of the Bank, of the 3d December 1795, and 11th February 1796, on the subject of an Imperial Loan.

ANSWER TO THE FIRST.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer having perused the Resolution with great attention, repeatedly said, That certainly, as matters were there stated, he should not think at present of bringing forward such a measure; adding, that though he should, in opening the Budget, make it known that he made reserve with the present contractors for the loan, to permit the Emperor's raising three millions, should circumstances require it, he should lay aside all thought of it, unless the situation of things, relative to the Bank, should so alter as to render such a loan of no importance or inconvenience to them in perspective.

The Governor promised him, that should such a change take place, and he should wish for the adoption of such a measure, he certainly would communicate it to him with pleasure.

Mr. Pitt wished very much to have the paper left with him for the purpose of communicating its contents to the Cabinet, if he found it necessary; promising, that no one should have a sight of it elsewhere, and that if the Governor would call upon him in two or three days, he would return it to him.

ANSWER TO THE SECOND.

Mr. Pitt replied, That after the repeated intimations which he had given to the Governor and Deputy Governor of the Bank, that no further loan to the Emperor would be resolved on without previous communication with the Bank, and due consideration of the state of their circumstances, he did not see any reason for these Resolutions; that he did suppose they were adopted in a moment of alarm, and that he should consider them in that light.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



